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Report on the Administration of Assam for the year 1938-39

SHILLONG

PRINTED AT THE ASSAM GOVERNMENT PRESS

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PART I

General Summary

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Report on the Administration of Assam for the year 1938-39

PART I—General Summary

The year opened in an atmosphere of some unrest. The Congress Socialist Party had been active in probing for grievances both among industrial labour in the oil fields, collieries and tea gardens and among the tenants of certain Zemindars. The idea of a no-rent campaign was abroad in connection with the Local Board elections, which returned a substantial number of Congressmen, though ultimately the Congress Party secured the Chairmanship in only four boards. Early in the year the Assam Congress leaders obtained the approval of the High Command to construct a Coalition Ministry if they could establish a majority. Political.

The rains were badly distributed and successive severe floods occurred at the end of May, and again in the latter half of July and in September, which did much damage in parts of the Province both to crops and to communications: more than once the provincial headquarters were virtually cut off from railway communication with the outer world for days. Some political capital was made of these ravages beyond their real importance, for in most parts the floods were little above the common level, and revenue came in comparatively poorly during the greater part of the year.

The province received much attention from important politicians including Mr. Subhas Bose, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Mr. M. N. Roy: also from Labour organizers such as Jelaluddin Hashemy, Chowkha Singh, and Dinkar Mehta. Much effort was expended to win over Muslim support for the Congress cause. A sudden crisis developed in September, when several members of the Assembly were found to have crossed the floor and the Premier, Sir Muhammad Saadulla, decided to resign in view of the apparent lack of a majority. A somewhat confused period followed. Mr. Gopi Nath Bardoloi formed a Ministry of five some days later, leaving three places in his proposed Cabinet vacant, and the Speaker then adjourned the House *sine die*. The Cabinet was gradually completed thereafter and the Congress Coalition faced the Assembly again in December with three Muslim members, Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, Maulavi Ali Haider Khan and Khan Bahadur Mahmud Ali. After a motion of no-confidence had been defeated by 54 votes to 50 the position of the Ministry became more solid by the accretion of several erstwhile opponents. The new Ministry put before the Assembly in March an important legislative programme including a Sales of Motor Spirit and Lubricants Taxation Bill, an Amusements and Betting Tax Bill, an Agricultural Income-Tax Bill and a Prohibition Bill. The first two of these readily passed both the Houses but the third was held up in the Legislative Council. At the close of the year the attention of the Government was focussed on the inauguration of an Opium Prohibition Scheme in the Dibrugarh and Sibsagar Subdivisions.

In the field of labour the year was profoundly disturbed. Threats of strike at Digboi led the Assam Oil Company to ask in July for a Court of Enquiry. In September a strike actually broke out among the contractors' labour, which was settled, partly through the efforts of the Premier, without serious incident. Some anxiety had been felt lest the strike should spread to the Company's labour but the more sober leaders appeared to have felt that the expected acceptance of the Court's recommendations, which was mainly accorded, would remove any just grievance. Just at the end of March, however, the discharge as a measure of economy of some employees enabled the hotheads to find provocation for a general strike and to utilize the position of bungalow servants (the discharge of one of whom during the enquiry had pointed to this as a possible cause of war) as an additional quarrel. Short-lived strikes were also prevalent throughout the year on tea gardens, and a good deal of trouble took place in the Dibru-Sadiya Railway and among the contractors' labour of the Assam Railways and Trading Company. Outside agitators including Jalaluddin Hashemy, Chowkha Singh, Dinkar Mehta and Sudhendra Pramanick, played an important part in this tussle for industrial power. A measure entitled the Assam Tea Garden Labourers' Freedom of Movement Bill was tabled in the Assembly, but a conference held under the auspices of the Congress-Coalition Ministry, at which assurances were given by the Tea Industry that the supposed grievances did not really existed to the Bill's withdrawal.

Communal hostility, from which Assam had in the past happily been mainly free, started early in the year with a trifling occurrence in Sunamganj subdivision, and the situation rapidly deteriorated after a clash at Hailakandi during the *Ultra Rathjatra* procession. Several incidents occurred thereafter of which the most serious was the gathering at Sylhet of a large body of Muslims from the villages during the Durga Pujas, it having been falsely spread abroad that the Kudratulla Mosque had been destroyed when a clash occurred during the Immersion processions over the playing of music before the mosque. Subsequently a party of Assam Rifles had for sometime to be posted in Sylhet to prevent a recurrence of trouble, *e. g.*, at the Shab-i-Barat. There were repercussions at Hailakandi, Karimgaj, Sibsagar and Putijuri in Habiganj. The Khasis were at one time also upset by the militant attitude of the Congress Party at Shillong and there was some disturbance. Towards the close of the year a communiqué was issued fixing the times at which music should not be played before mosques: this satisfied the Hindus, but many Muslims considered such a fixation unnecessary and liable to cause provocation ; they therefore continued to agitate for the adoption of the formula which had been at one time settled at a meeting—that music should at all times be barred before any religious edifice.

Peasant agitation led in the early part of the year to considerable tension between landlords and tenants in Karimganj subdivision, and towards the end to a good deal of lawlessness in the Bhatipara estate in Sunamganj, which necessitated the deputation of a party of armed police to keep the peace.

Relation with Frontier Tribes.

2. The year was on the whole peaceful, and the conduct of the tribes generally good.

The Political Officer, Balipara Frontier Tract, paid a visit to Towang and it neighbourhood.

The Political Officer, Sadiya Frontier Tract, carried out an extensive tour in unadministered territory of the Abor Hills.

Crops and condition of the people.

3. The year was on the whole a difficult and trying one for the agriculturists. In the Assam Valley weather conditions were unfavourable in almost all the districts and consequently crops were poor. A prolonged drought in the spring of 1937-38 caused delay in the sowing of broadcast rice. It was followed by two severe floods in quick succession resulting in considerable damage to the crops and communications and causing distress over a large area throughout the Valley. The people were temporarily rendered homeless and innumerable cattle were destroyed. Relief was necessary in all the districts and was promptly rendered. In the Surma Valley too, the condition of crops was not quite satisfactory. Continuous rains, floods, drought and insects damaged the crops considerably. Public health was on the whole not bad. There were however Sporadic cases of cholera, small-pox and some other diseases like malaria, dysentery, etc. in some districts.

Assam Rifles.

4. The number of men enlisted rose from 296 in 1937 to 341 during this year. There was not even a single desertion and the number of deaths during the year fell to 8. No military operations were conducted during the year. Discipline continued to be maintained at a high standard.

Police and crime.

Year ending the 31st December 1938

5. The total number of cognizable cases as well as the number of serious offences against persons and property increased during the year. The administration of motor vehicles worked satisfactorily. There was a complete absence of subversive movements in the province but the communal clash and the labour unrest in tea gardens and Digboi oil fields gave cause for growing anxiety.

Jails.

Year ending the 31st December 1938.

6. The daily average number of prisoners of all classes fell from 3,566 in 1937 to 3,304 in 1938. The average period of detention of under-trials increased from 20·6 days in 1937 to 21·23 days in 1938. There was a small increase in the number of offences committed by prisoners. Though there was a decrease in the number of admissions to hospital, there was an increase in the number of mortality.

The average net cash earnings per head of convicts sentenced to labour fell from Rs.9-11-0 to Rs.7-12-0.

The Assam Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society continued its work and gave financial assistance to 9 *ex*-convicts and a small amount was distributed on relief by the District Committees. The seven temporary teachers continued to give elementary instruction to prisoners of 30 years, age or under. The scheme for placing Subdivisional Medical Officers in combined administrative and medical charge of jails in all subdivisional headquarters was sanctioned on a permanent basis during the year as it had worked satisfactorily.

Municipalities.

7. The number of Municipal institutions and their constitution remained the same. Habiganj continued to be under supersession and a similar fate overtook Sylhet. Section 12 of the Assam Municipal Act was amended to test electoral qualifications with reference to a prescribed date. Rules for the imposition of mooring fees could not be applied since the boundaries of Municipalities could not be extended to mid-stream. The number of meetings fell from 322 to 308 in the Assam Valley while it rose from 152 to 164 in the Surma Valley. The number of meetings which proved abortive for want of requisite quorum stood at 20 against 17 and that of meetings adjourned, at 28 against 29. Of the total number of meetings adjourned, Gauhati is responsible for 11. The average percentage of attendance of non-official members fell from 70 to 68 in the Assam Valley and from 68·40 to 60 in the Surma Valley while that of "expert advisers" rose from 7 to 12 in the Assam Valley but fell from 25·29 to 19 in the Surma Valley. Shillong and Dibrugarh hold the best record in this respect each with a percentage of 75 while Nowgong is at the other end of the scale with a percentage of 53. Among Small Towns Nalbari heads the list with a percentage of 85. The total income excluding grants from provincial revenues and opening balance, etc. shows a fall from Rs. 6,13,391 to Rs. 5,97,062 in the Assam Valley but an increase from Rs. 4,66,882 to Rs. 4,79,394 in the Surma Valley. Contributions from provincial revenues amounted to Rs. 1,25,219 against Rs.1,38,718 in the Assam Valley and to Rs. 84,563 against Rs. 87,240 in the Surma Valley, and include compensatory grants for loss of revenue due to the provincialisation of the motor vehicles tax. The large decrease under this head in the case of the Assam Valley is mostly accounted for by the inclusion in the previous year's total of the special grant of Rs. 16,000 to the Tezpur Board towards the cost of an improved water-supply for the Mental Hospital and Jail. The total expenditure, excluding repayment of loans, etc., shows a fall from Rs.7,37,894 to Rs.7,23,212 in the Assam Valley and from Rs.5,71,729 to Rs.5,63,331 in the Surma Valley. No loan was granted. The financial position of the Boards continued to be bad. The position of Sylhet and Gauhati was desperate. The Sylhet Municipal Board had on the 10th February 1939, on which day it was superseded, outstanding taxes to the extent of Rs. 56,105, liabilities of Rs. 35,015 and a cash balance of Rs.212 only but it was possible for the official executive to reduce by the end of the year outstanding taxes to Rs. 20,335 and liabilities to Rs. 18,511, and to raise the cash balance to the extent of Rs. 9,406. Gauhati had a net liability covering about 47 per cent. of its demand inspite of the collection standing at 99·92 per cent. Apart from this the establishment could not be paid regularly ; neither could it pay the employees' subscription to the Provident Fund nor its share of the contributions to the Postal Savings Bank in time. In spite of all this it dragged on the revaluation work and inordinately delayed proposals for extending the town which, if completed in time, would have increased its resources. It whittled down the valuation made by the official assessor thus rendering itself unable to liquidate its debts for which complaints are received frequently by Government. Tezpur deserves special mention, its outstanding being only Rs. 70 and remission less than one per cent.

Local Boards

Year ending 31st March 1939.

8. There was no change in the number or constitution of the Boards. The year under report was the first year of the working of the newly elected boards. All the local boards in the province are now being presided over by non-officials. Two of the non-official chairmen were appointed by Government while the rest were elected by members of the Boards.

While the Boards as a whole continued to be in a state of financial stagnation, the Boards in the Sylhet district were compelled owing to the repeal of the Assam Local Rates (Amendment) Act to reduce their expenditure on many of their activities and some of them, namely Sunamganj and Habiganj, were even unable to maintain their minimum closing balance. Middle English schools decreased

by one in each Valley. Middle Vernacular schools showed an increase of 4 in the Assam Valley and 5 in the Surma Valley. Primary schools for boys and girls recorded a further increase of 147 in the Assam Valley and 76 in the Surma Valley,

The number of dispensaries increased by 2—one under the Gauhati Local Board and the other under the Dibrugarh Local Board. The Goalpara Local Board added a maternity ward to their hospital in Goalpara and the Dhubri Board instituted a paying ward in the Dhubri Hospital.

Tanks, ring-wells and tube-wells, whichever were considered suitable, have been constructed out of the Government of India grant for rural uplift.

The expenditure on communication fell from Rs.5,82,455 to Rs.5,77,410 in the Assam Valley and from Rs.2,24,102 to Rs.1,46,334 in the Surma Valley.

Agriculture.

9. Dr. S. K. Mitra was in charge of the Department during the year under review. Experiments and researches made satisfactory progress at the Experimental Stations at the Karimganj, Titabar, Habiganj, Jorhat, Upper Shillong, Khanapara, Sylhet and Shillong, and the Citrus Fruit Experiment Station at Burnihat was started towards the end of the year. Agricultural Marketing Survey completed 4 years, during the year under report, and made satisfactory progress. The activities of the livestock section were continued and the usual crop demonstrations, including the demonstration of the cultivation of *boro* paddy on *amon* land under mechanical irrigation, yielded good results.

Co-operative Societies.

Year ending 31st March 1939.

10. The number of societies of all kinds increased from 1,495 to 1,551 but the working capital decreased from Rs.90,20,280 to Rs.88,25,203. The movement in general showed no sign of improvement.

Forests.

11. The total area of reserved and protected forests was 6,514 square miles, an increase of 3 square miles. Working Plans exist for 4,680 square miles of these forests and plans are under preparation or revision for 893 and 103 square miles respectively.

The receipts for the year fell from Rs.17,50,720 to Rs.16,69,298 and expenditure from Rs.11,72,249 to Rs.11,60,713. The reduction was in each case partly due to the separate exhibition of the Khasi States Fund (Receipts Rs. 45,800 and expenditure Rs. 4,300) and was therefore not wholly real. The result was a surplus of Rs.5,08,585 (or Rs.5,50,085, including the Khasi State Fund) against Rs. 5,78,471 in the preceding year.

The total revenue earned by the Goalpara Tramway was Rs.55,712 against an expenditure of Rs.30,007.

The elephant catching operations fetched about Rs.63,000 against about Rs.40,000 in the previous year.

The royalty on lac rose from Rs.21,984 to Rs.25,569.

Tea Industry.

12. The number of gardens increased from 1,119 to 1,120 and the total area under tea decreased from 439,990 acres (revised) to 438,989 acres. The total outturn of the province amounted to 260,248,898 lbs. of black and 808,493 lbs. of green tea against 241,467,611 lbs. and 67,372 lbs. respectively of the previous year.

The average Calcutta price per lb. for Brahmaputra Valley tea was eight annas and four pies and for Surma Valley tea six annas and two pies against nine annas and five pies and seven annas and nine pies respectively in the previous year.

Industry.

13. As in the previous year, the activities of the Department were confined to the encouragement of handloom weaving and sericulture and to the spread of technical and industrial education in the province. Various schemes which were recommended by the Advisory Board of Development of Assam, could not be given effect to on account of financial stringency. Among the cottage industries of the province, handloom weaving occupied the foremost place and instructions were imparted through two weaving institutes and four peripatetic weaving parties. The work for the improvement of sericulture was restricted to production of cellular seeds of *eri*, *muga* and *pat*. During the year the weather conditions in Lower Assam were unfavourable for *muga* crops. The Upper Assam rearers, however, had generally favourable weather. Private institutions were encouraged by contributions from the provincial revenues as well as from the income of the Williamson Education Endowment Fund for imparting vocational training to students of the province.

14. The excise revenue fell from Rs.36,38,885 to Rs.35,77,092. The consumption of country spirit and *ganja* increased from 2,58,661 L. P. gallons to 2,76,832 L. P. gallons and 288 mds. 19 srs. to 303 mds. 10 srs. respectively. Excise.

The increase in the consumption of country spirit was due to the check put on illicit distillation, excessive brewing of *pachwai*, the fraud practised on the consumers by the vendors, and the opening of lessee manager shops in the localities where illicit distillation was suspected. The reversion of consumers to licit sources as they realized the risk of using contraband supplies is mainly responsible for the increase in the consumption of *ganja*. Owing to the reduction policy of Government the consumption of opium fell from 207 mds. 15 srs. to 183 mds. 6 srs.

15. The year opened with 281 hospitals and dispensaries against 274 in 1937. The total number of patients treated in the State-public, Local Fund and Private-Aided hospitals and dispensaries was 1,994,687 against 2,111,779 in the preceding year. The total income (including opening balances) and expenditure were Rs. 10,95,586 and Rs. 9,40,492 against Rs. 1,217,396 and Rs. 10,45,202 in 1937 respectively. Hospitals and Dispensaries.

Year ending 31st December 1938.

16. The total number of mental patients in hospital at the end of the year was 689 and the daily average strength was 688·46 against 699·96 in 1937. The expenditure rose from Rs. 1,24,686-2-6 in 1937 to Rs. 1,28,644-14-6 in 1938. Mental Hospital.

Year ending 31st December 1938.

17. In all 1,875 patients completed treatment during the year against 1,806 in 1937. Of these 152 were treated in the Pasteur Institute and 1,723 in the out-centres. The mortality amongst all treated cases was 0·79 per cent. against 0·89 per cent. in 1937. Pasteur Institute.

Year ending 31st December 1938.

The Assam Medical Research Society continued to function.

18. The birth and death-rates were 29·92 and 22·42 against 31·31 and 22·21 respectively in 1937. Vital statistics.

19. The state of public health was on the whole unsatisfactory. There were fewer cases of small-pox, dysentery, fever and diarrhœa. The number of deaths from cholera was 11,907 against 5,440 and from *kala-azar* was 1,338 against 1,057 as compared with the previous year. The total number of Quinine re-inforced Cinchona-febrifuge treatments sold fell from 9,752 to 7,931 as compared with the preceding year. Sanitation.

20. The total number of vaccination operation performed was 855,034 against 825,907 in 1937. The death-rate from small-pox per mille was 0·19 against 0·25 in the preceding year. Vaccination.

21. The number of institutions of all kinds increased by 722 and that of pupils by 50,415. Recognised institutions rose from 7,983 to 8,297 and their enrolment from 456,306 to 485,992. The total expenditure on public instruction increased from Rs.58,52,440 to Rs.60,22,085. Education.

The enrolment in the two Government Arts Colleges rose from 1,734 to 1,799.

Muhammadan pupils in all classes of educational institutions for Indians increased from 138,507 to 151,693.

22.(*a*) As already stated in the last year's report, this province receives, as a result of the Niemeyer Award, from the year 1937-38, a recurring contribution of Trs. 30,00 and 62½ per cent. instead of 50 per cent. of the jute export duty. The year 1937-38 started with an opening balance of Trs. 24,64 and was expected to close with a closing balance of Trs. 33,34, but it actually closed with a balance of Trs. 30,98. The decrease in the closing balance was the result of variations under different heads both on the revenue and the capital sides. Finance Budget.

(*b*) The year 1938-39 thus started with an opening balance of Trs. 30,98 and the revenue receipts and expenditure were estimated at Trs. 2,64,24 and Trs. 2,68,86 respectively thus anticipating an excess of expenditure charged to revenue over revenue of Trs. 4,62. The actual receipts and expenditure, however, amounted to Trs. 2,58,49 and Trs. 3,01,35 respectively, which resulted in a deficit of Trs. 42,86. The decrease of Trs. 5,75 under revenue receipts is mainly due to a fall of Trs. 8,06 under " Land Revenue " which is partly due to a further increase in the percentage of remission of land revenue and partly to Actuals of Revenue expenditure and surplus.

suspension and remission of revenue owing to the floods of 1938, Trs. 1,55 under "Stamps" as a result of the floods, counterbalanced by a receipt of Trs. 3,00 as this Government's share of income-tax, and an increase of Trs. 2,06 under "Civil Works". The increase of Trs. 32,49 in expenditure is due mainly to the repayment of the loan of Trs. 30,65 taken from the Government of India to meet the deficit in the accounts of 1936-37 and partly to a larger expenditure under "Famine Relief" to meet the necessity of giving gratuitous relief on a large scale during the floods of 1938. The original estimate of revenue expenditure for the year under review, however, included a sum of Rs. 51,938 for new schemes of which Rs. 18,333 was non-recurring and Rs. 33,605 recurring. Supplementary grants to the extent of Trs. 39,71 were also voted by the Assembly during the year.

Capital account. Under Capital, Debt and Deposit Heads the revenue was estimated at Trs. 3,82,77 and expenditure at Trs. 3,71,01, but the actual receipts and expenditure amounted to Trs. 5,53,54 and Trs. 5,14,42 respectively. The receipts and expenditure under these heads are of a fluctuating nature and any increase or decrease in receipts is followed by a similar increase or decrease in expenditure.

General. Although the financial condition of the province was not very satisfactory it was found necessary to finance a few new schemes during the year totalling fifty-two thousand rupees, in the interest of efficient administration. The continuance of and in some cases the increase in the remissions of land revenue sanctioned in 1937-38 resulted in a total loss of Government revenue to the extent of Trs. 28,04. Gratuitous relief was also given to the people affected by the floods to the extent of Trs. 2,58. A Resources and Retrenchment Committee was formed in 1937 to find out ways and means to increase the revenue and to decrease expenditure. The report of the Committee is now under the consideration of Government.

Stamps. 23. The provincial revenue derived in Assam under the Stamp and Court Fees Acts fell from Rs. 18,09,946 to Rs. 17,87,288.

PART II

Administration Report

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CHAPTER VII.—INSTRUCTION

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Report on the Administration of Assam for the year 1938-39

PART II—REPORT

CHAPTER I

PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

SECTION 1.—Physical Features of the Country, Area, Climate and Chief Staples

SECTION 2.—Historical Summary

SECTION 4.—Character of Land Tenures, System of Surveys and Settlements

SECTION 5.—Civil Divisions of British Territory

[*See* Administration Report, 1921-22, Part II, pages 1-74.]

SECTION 6.—Details of Last Census, Tribes and Languages

[*Vide* Report on the Census of Assam, 1931.]

SECTION 7.—Changes in the Administration

His Excellency Sir Robert Niel Reid, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., continued to hold the office of Governor.

His Excellency Mr. (now Sir) Gilbert Pitcairn Hogg, C.S.I., C.I.E., I.C.S., and His Excellency Mr. Henry Joseph Twynam, C.S.I., C.I.E., I.C.S., officiated as Governors of Assam respectively from the 25th June 1938 to the 24th October 1938 and from the 24th February 1939 to the end of the year, during which periods His Excellency Sir Robert Reid was absent from the Province for the purpose of acting as Governor of Bengal.

On the resignation of the members constituting the Saadulla Cabinet, His Excellency the Governor reconstituted his Council of Ministers on the 19th September 1938 with the following gentlemen :—

The Hon'ble Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi.

The Hon'ble Babu Akshay Kumar Das.

The Hon'ble Srijut Ramnath Das.

The Hon'ble Babu Kamini Kumar Sen.

The Hon'ble Srijut Rupnath Brahma.

The Hon'ble Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mahmud Ali were appointed to be members of the Council of Ministers on the 13th October 1938, and the Hon'ble Maulavi Md. Ali Haidar Khan on the 20th *idem*.

SECTION 8.—Frontier relations

[*See* Administration Report for 1921-22, Part II, pages 79-91.]

SECTION 9.—Relations with the Frontier Tribes

[*See* Report on the Frontier Tribes for the year 1938-39.]

FRONTIER TRIBES

Abors. 2. The Political Officer carried out an extensive tour in unadministered territory in the Abor Hills and was well received everywhere. He made it known to the people that the practice of buying and selling slaves is disapproved of by Government. The Abors were on the whole peaceful, and their health and crops were good.

Miris. 3. The Miris living along the banks of the Dibong, Dihang and Brahmaputra rivers are the descendants of the Abors who left the hills many generations ago owing to dearth of land and consequent pressure from tribes moving down from the north. The habit of taking opium is widely prevalent among them.

Mishmis. 4. The Political Officer toured up the Lohit Valley as far as the confluence of the Dou and was received everywhere with great friendliness. The Digaru and Miju Mishmis were peaceful, and gave no trouble. The Miju and Digaru country was twice visited by a very virulent type of Influenza in an epidemic form.

Khamptis and Singphos. 5. The Khamptis and Singphos gave no trouble. Their trade in rice was extensive.

Tibetans and Monbas. 6. Tibetans and Monbas came down, as usual, for purposes of trade. They behaved well.

Bhutias. 7. Bhutias came down, as usual, for purposes of trade. There was no complaint about their conduct.

Akas. 8. The Akas behaved well. Some of their Chiefs came to meet His Excellency the Governor during his visit to Charduar.

Miji Akas. 9. The Miji Akas extort tribute from the Monbas of the Dirangdzong area. The Political Officer visited Nakhu and certain other villages in the Miji Aka country and warned them against committing raids and depredations on the Monbas and exacting tribute from them.

Daflas. 10. A large number of western Daflas visited the plains for purposes of trade and work. There were some raids among the eastern Daflas in the Runganuddi and Dikrang areas. Kabeng village raided Pinji village and took eight prisoners. Kabeng having disobeyed the orders of Government to release the prisoners, the village was visited by the Political Officer and suitably punished.

Nagas. 11. The Sarkari Nagas behaved well. The conduct of the Barduaria and Namsangia Nagas gave no cause of complaint.

There was no visible unrest among the Kacha Nagas, but there were surreptitious attempts to stir up trouble.

The Sangtams and the Semas were quiet and well-behaved.

The Konyaks were restless throughout the year. Several Konyak villages disobeyed the orders of Government prohibiting the use of guns in tribal warfare. Orders fining certain villages 300 guns were announced at a Darbar held by His Excellency the Governor in person. The guns were duly surrendered by the villages concerned.

SECTION 10.—Condition of the people

12. The general health of the people was on the whole not bad. There were however sporadic cases of cholera and small-pox in Cachar and Sylhet and in some parts of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Cholera also occurred in the wake of the floods in Goalpara, Kamrup, the submontane areas of the Garo Hills and in a milder form in Sibsagar ; but timely preventive measures stopped the spread of the epidemic. Towards the close of the year, some other diseases such as malaria, opthalmia, dysentery, etc., were wide-spread in all districts.

Material condition of the people in the Assam Valley remained much the same as in the previous year. The people in the extensive flood-affected areas were not in a prosperous condition ; but in other places it was satisfactory. In the Surma Valley also there was no appreciable change in the condition. It was rather worse than in the previous year due to failure of crops and other natural calamities. Government continued the concession of general remission of land revenue on account of the economic depression. The two Debt Conciliation Boards—one in the South Kamrup in the Assam Valley and the other in the North Sylhet Subdivision—set up last year, functioned throughout the year. The working of the former Board was not as expected while that of the latter was very satisfactory.

SECTION 11.—The Assam Public Service Commission

The Assam Public Service Commission.

13. The Commission incurred a total expenditure of Rs.70,407 during the year 1938-39.

During the year, it dealt with 178 cases of appointments, including promotions, 22 disciplinary cases and 10 miscellaneous references on claims for reimbursement of costs incurred by Government servants in defending legal proceedings instituted against them. It also advised Government in connection with the allotment of 3 seats and the award of 3 scholarships tenable at the Medical College, Calcutta, and the draft Forest Service and General Service Rules.

It also conducted the Departmental Examinations and held six examinations in connection with recruitment to the Services.

The Commission also made many important references to Government on various subjects mainly on the methods of recruitment to different services and the interpretation of certain rules.

Administration of the land.

CHAPTER II

ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAND

SECTION I.—Realisation of revenue

[*See* Reports of the Land Revenue Administration, Assam, for the year ending the 30th June 1939].

General.

14. An account of the demand and collection of Land Revenue will be found in Chapter V—"Revenue and Finance".

The total net increase in the settled area of the province as a whole amounted to 58,493 acres. Increases of 59,213 acres in the Assam Valley and of 41 acres in the Frontier Tracts of Sadiya and Balipara were partly counterbalanced by a decrease of 861 acres in the Surma Valley. The increase in the Assam Valley was shared by all the districts and was mainly due to the extension of cultivation. The decrease in the Surma Valley was mainly due to exclusion of *tauzi bahir* lands and also to exclusion from settlement on account of *faut ferar* etc., and acquisition of lands for public purposes. The area for special cultivation decreased to the extent of 5,506 acres in the Assam Valley while there was an increase of 915 acres in the Surma Valley. The total revenue demand was Rs.1,27,63,613 against Rs.1,26,44,498 in the last year.

Colonization.

15. The working of the colonization schemes in Nowgong and Mangaldai was smooth. The question of addition of new areas to the schemes was however acute as no further lands were available for settlement and consequently there was a considerable decrease in the amount of premium in Nowgong.

In Mangaldai, the area allotted during the year was 8,489 bighas ; 33,113 bighas were held under annual *pattas* with a revenue demand of Rs.15,988-3-0. An area of 4,229 bighas in 12 villages was fit for conversion into periodic *pattas* and premiuim on 3,081 bighas was realised in full during the year. There was no more good land available for settlement within the colonisation area and no new area was added to the scheme during the year. The total collection of premium during the year was Rs. 51,133 against Rs. 50,247 in the preceding year.

In Nowgong 1,127½ bighas of land were allotted to 169 families against 8,067 bighas to 999 families in the preceding year. The premium collected during the year was Rs.9,152 against Rs.72,718 in the previous year. As no further land was available for settlement the figures decreased considerably. Registration fees could not be realised from the intending colonists during the year, as no new block was thrown open. An area of 35,914 bighas of land was assessed to revenue amounting to Rs.19,135 (including local rates) and periodic *pattas* were issued for an area of 6,443 bighas of land after realisation of the premium in full during the year.

In Barpathar, an area of 9,277 acres was occupied during the year bringing the total settled area under the development scheme, to 54,962 acres. The total collection of premium was Rs.2,392 against Rs.1,101 in the preceding year.

Permanently settled Estates.

16. The total number of permanently-settled estates was 49,667 against 49,694 in the preceding year. Of these, 49,647 with an area of 2,399,722 acres and revenue of Rs.3,59,260 are situated in the Surma Valley. The decrease in the number of estates, in the area, and in the demand occurred in the Surma Valley and was due to the fact that 27 estates with an area of 20 acres and land revenue of Rs.9 were purchased by the Government at sales for arrears of revenue. In the Assam Valley there were 20 estates with 1,519,410 acres in area and a revenue of Rs.11,423.

Coercive measures.

17. The result of coercive measures employed for the collection of land revenue during the year under report was as follows :—

——	No. of warrants of attachments issued	No. of cases in which moveable properties were actually sold	No. of cases in which estates were sold
Assam Valley including Frontier Tracts.	41,834	2,214	1,338
Surma Valley	16,045	135	305

Adminis-tration of the land.

There was a considerable decrease under all these three items as compared with the previous year. The decrease was mainly due to collection work having commenced late and coercive measures being avoided in the flood-stricken areas.

Revenue process.

18. The number of revenue processes fell from 366,270 to 319,963 and fees from Rs.2,09,621 to Rs.1,68,633.

Miscellaneous revenue.

19. The demand for miscellaneous revenue increased from Rs.19,56,828 to Rs.23,03,004 in the year ; of this Rs.20,71,627 were collected and Rs.42,958 were remitted.

SECTION 2

20. *Settlement.*— There were no major resettlement operations during the year.

Extension survey was carried out by the Land Records Staff as usual in all the districts except Cachar and Goalpara. The total area thus surveyed during the year under report was 74·02 as against 52·05 square miles in the preceding year.

SECTION 3.—Land Records

21. The total sanctioned strength of Supervisor Kanungos remained the same as in the previous year namely 90.

The total sanctioned number of recorders also remained the same at 1,233. Among them there was an appreciable increase in the number of resident recorders.

SECTION 4.—Settlement of land for special cultivation (waste land).

22. No application for settlement of land for special cultivation was entertained owing to the restrictions imposed by the Tea Control Act. All the nine applications which remained pending in Cachar in the previous year were disposed of.

The total area for special cultivation decreased by 4,591 acres ; but there was an insignificant increase of Rs.45 in the revenue. The Assam Valley Division was responsible for a decrease of 5,506 acres in area and Rs. 367 in revenue which was mainly due to relinquishment, but there was an increase of 915 acres in area and Rs. 412 in revenue in the Surma Valley due to new settlement and progressive assessment.

Agricultural Loans.

23. Agricultural loans issued during the year amounted to Rs.4,84,923 against Rs.24,617 in the preceding year. The principal and interest under the Agricultural Loans Act due for recovery during the year amounted to Rs.2,80,234 of which Rs.10,136 was collected, and the balance was carried over. The collection was poor, but this could not be helped in view of the fact that the borrowers are generally residents of low-lying areas affected by successive floods or other calamities, which made their paying capacity low, and consequently suspension of collection was inevitable. No remission was however granted during the year in the Assam Valley, while in Sylhet and Khasi and Jaintia Hills Rs. 37,162 were remitted.

Other revenue works.

24. No irrigation drainage or embankment was undertaken during the year. Some bunds were however constructed and *nalas* dug in some low-lying areas of the Sylhet district for improving the boro cultivation. The pumps supplied by the Agricultural Department for irrigation to help the Boro cultivation in parts of Sylhet and Cachar districts were not very successful.

Partition.

25. The statement below shows the details of partition cases dealt with during the year :—

Pending at the close of the year	Instituted during the year	Total	Disposed of during the year	Pending at the close of the year
389	448	837	489	348

Adminis- tration of the land.

SECTION 5.—Government Estate

Nil.

SECTION 6.—Wards and attached estates

(*See* Report on the Administration of the Court of Wards' Estates in the Province of Assam for the year 1938-39 and the resolution thereon.)

26. With the taking over of three Estates in Sylhet belonging to Mr. Gopika Raman Roy and his family and of one in Goalpara, belonging to Srijuts Nilmadhab Barua and Priyamadhab Barua of Salkocha, the number of estates under the Court of Wards increased from eight to twelve during the year.

Revenue, rent and cesses.

27. The demand on account of rents and cesses due to all these estates, excepting those of the three estates of Mr. Gopika Raman Roy and his family for which figures are not available, amounted to Rs.20,96,372 (including an arrear demand of Rs.12,33,351) as compared with Rs.22,50,652 in the previous year.

Collection.

28. Out of the total demand, a sum of Rs.6,43,170 or 74 per cent. of the current demand was realised.

Debts.

29. The extent by which the different estates reduced their debts during the year is given below :—

	Reduction during the year including interest	Debt outstanding at the end of the year including arrears of interest
	Rs.	Rs.
Bijni Raj Estate	37,473	58,254
Srirgram Barua Estate	1,037	1,13,204
Darrang Raj Estate	2,160	18,686
Nripa Estate	3,000	23,336
Mazumdari	5,636	1,00,248
Dastidar	1,06,721	1,48,298

Management.

30. In the Surma Valley Estates the percentage of cost of management was 18·69 per cent. while in the bigger estates in the Assam Valley it was 14·5 per cent. in Mechpara and 16·2 in Bijni.

General.

31. The estates in the Surma Valley being small and involved in debts, were unable to take up any work of public utility. In the Assam Valley, Mechpara Estate spent Rs.12,717 and Bijni Rs.66,745 on schools, dispensaries, agriculture, sanitation, etc.

As in the previous year, the record-of-rights in the surveyed areas of the Mechpara Estate was maintained up to date and block surveys and record attestation of 10 villages completed. The assessment of new areas brought within the estate as a result of the settlement of the Habraghat-Mechpara boundary dispute was given effect to during the year. The relaying of the Pargana boundary between Jinarimukh and Pancharatna and that between Mechpara A Mahal and Khas Garo Hills was completed within the year.

In the Bijni Raj, although the need of preparation of records-of-right for the huge entire estate is recognised, in its present state of affairs it is unable to bear the expenditure for the purpose. The question of giving a start with block surveys is engaging the attention of the authorities.

The boundary dispute between the estate and the neighbouring Zemindars and tenure holders continued. Of the 2 cases taken up, one was settled.

In the Srigram Barua estate no survey could be undertaken. In the Darrang Raj Estate the general survey and records-of-right of all mauzas were finished during the year.

In the Surma Valley estates no survey or preparation of records-of-right was undertaken except for the survey of certain areas of the Dastidar Estate.

SECTION 7.—Revenue and rent paying classes

32. The Goalpara Tenancy Act, the Assam (Temporarily Settled Districts) Tenancy Act and the Sylhet Tenancy Act were in force throughout the year. The relationship between the tenants and landlords was on the whole not very satisfactory in some parts of the Sylhet district where agitation to secure a better tenancy law continued.

Adminis-tration of the land.

SECTION 8.—The Assam Revenue Tribunal

33. The total cost of the Tribunal for the financial year 1938-39 was Rs.49,501. Fifty-two appeals were pending at the close of the year 1937-38 and 251 appeals were received during the year. Of these 236 were disposed of, leaving 67 pending at the close of the year.

SECTION 9.—Political Report for the district of Sylhet

34. The Mantala dispute was settled and the new boundary was notified in Government Notification No. 2595R., dated the 25th July 1938.

The Ektearpur, Dhupanimara, Morajuri River, Longai Forest Reserve and Khoiyajuri River disputes still awaited settlement.

The boundary dispute between Sylhet and certain Khasi States in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.—The Survey Department was asked to take up the relay of the boundary.

The Survey Department is now awaiting the appointment of a commission.

CHAPTER III

PROTECTION

SECTION 1.—Legislative Authority

(See General Administration Report 1937-38 Part II.—Pages 6-9.)

SECTION 2.—Course of Legislation

35. In the year under report there were two Sessions of the Assam Legislative Council in the months of August, September and March and three Sessions of the Assam Legislative Assembly in the months of September, December, March and April.

36. The following Bills were passed by both the Chambers of the Assam Legislature in the different Sessions during the year 1938-39:—

(1) The Good Conduct Prisoners' Probational Release Bill, 1937.

(2) The Assam Provincial Legislature (Removal of Disqualifications) Bill 1937.

These have since become Acts II and III of 1938.

SECTION 3.—Police

ASSAM RIFLES

(See Report on the Administration of the Police Department for the year 1938.)

37. The temporary reduction on grounds of economy continued and at the end of the year the force was 8 officers (5 British and 3 Indian) and 189 men below the full sanctioned strength. One post of Assistant Commandant in each of the four Battalions remained vacant temporarily at the end of the year, while one post of Assistant Commandant in the 3rd (Naga Hills) Battalion was kept unfilled throughout the year under the orders of Government, as a measure of economy.

38. The number of men enlisted rose from 296 in 1937 to 341 during the year. There was not a single desertion and the number of deaths during the year fell to 8. There was a noticeable improvement in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Battalions in the 'man-days' lost due to sickness. As before, malaria continued to be the main cause of this loss to effective strength.

No military operations were conducted during the year, but the usual detachments were furnished, and three such were arranged in connection with communal tension in the Surma Valley.

Discipline continued to be maintained at a high standard.

POLICE

(See Report on the Administration of the Police Department for the year ending the 31st December 1938.)

Strength.

39. The sanctioned strength of the police force was 4,474 against 4,464 in 1937 while the actual strength was 4,365 against 4,335. The proportions between police and area, population and cognizable crime investigated were 11·45 sq. miles, 1914·11 and 3·36 respectively. There was no change in the number of police stations during the year although some progress was made with the project of splitting up the Jaldhup police station into two jurisdictions of Beanibazar and Barlekha. The shortage of suitable Muslim recruits for the rank of constables continued in both valleys. The communal clash in the Surma Valley and the growth of labour unrest both in the tea districts and in the oil fields of the Assam Oil Company at Digboi and Tinsukia caused much anxiety to the Department, and the year was on the whole a strenuous one for the force.

40. Discipline was generally satisfactory. There was a marked drop in total casualties from 279 to 218 and the admissions into hospitals from 1,293 to 1,184 while the health of the force showed a gradual improvement. Owing to lack of funds the housing conditions of the force continued unsatisfactory. Many of the existing buildings were reported to be in a really dangerous condition and the lack of accommodation was keenly felt in some areas. Health and conduct.

The number of escapes from police custody continued to decrease from 14 in 1935, 17 in 1936, 9 in 1937 to 8 in 1938 ; while criminal cases brought against the police fell from 85 to 63. Departmental punishments increased while judicial convictions slightly decreased. The number of officers, men and outsiders rewarded increased from 311, 1,235 and 328 to 367, 1,376 and 372 respectively.

41. No change was made in the organisation of the Railway police during the year. The number of cases found true increased from 353 to 413, total railway accidents from 360 to 390 and persons killed from 68 to 81. Railway Police.

42. There was no river dacoity during the year. The staff of the River Police in Sylhet patrolled the numerous water ways and continued to maintain a close watch on the members of the Criminal Tribes gangs as well as other bad characters. River Police.

43. The number of rural police was 6,503 against 6,494 in 1937 and the total cost of their maintenance was Rs.3,91,455 against Rs.4,20,032 in the preceding year. There was a marked fall in the percentage of punishments from 47·16 to 42·13. The chaukidars were found useful in certain areas for night patrol in co-operation with the police. There was a demand from the Sylhet district for an improvement in the chaukidari system, particularly in the manner of their payment. Rural Police.

44. The total cost of the police (other than Assam Rifles) for the year 1938-39 showed a reduction of Trs. 48 and 88 as compared with the figures for 1937-38 and 1936-37 respectively. The expenditure on new construction decreased from Rs.40,640 to Rs.31,917. Although the expenditure on repairs increased by over Trs. 5, the department was suffering seriously for lack of adequate funds for housing, office accommodation, etc., and many schemes were on the waiting list at the close of the year. Finance.

45. The total number of cognizable cases under classes I—V reported to the police and instituted in courts increased by 687 and 25 respectively during the year while the percentages of conviction and of persons convicted decreased. Serious crime showed an increase from 8,614 to 8,863 during the year but there was a falling off in cases of murder, dacoity, robbery and cattle theft. The number of police cases declared false was more or less stationary, but the percentage of prosecutions against complainants ending in conviction fell from 42·85 to 34·71 during the year. Agrarian trouble manifested itself in the Bhatipara Zemindari in the Sylhet district and continued till the end of the year and the growth in labour unrest continued to give cause for much anxiety. Crime.

46. The percentage of cases remanded more than six times and also of cases disposed of at the first two hearings fell from 9·84 and 40·41 to 9·09 and 39·04 respectively during the year. Disposal of cases.

47. The number of motor vehicles on the road at the end of the year was 5,668 while the number of motor accidents rose from 267 to 295, of these 180 were caused by public service vehicles, 59 persons were killed and 414 injured as compared with 65 and 516 respectively in 1937. Temporary posts of one Sergeant and one Inspector of Motor Vehicles were sanctioned during the year for motor transport control, the cost being borne by the Central Road Board. The receipts under the Motor Vehicles Act and the Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Act increased from Rs.48,043 and Rs.2,12,603 to Rs.54,644 and Rs.2,79,036 respectively. The Assam Motor Vehicles Act is being worked well by the officers and men of the Police Department. Motor Vehicles.

48. The officers of the Intelligence Branch were engaged in dealing with intricate cases of crime. There was a complete absence of subversive movements in the province. Criminal Investigation Department.

49. Village Defence parties in Kamrup and Sylhet, the Finger Print Bureau and the Photographic Bureau continued to do useful work. Miscellaneous.

SECTION 4.—Criminal Justice

[*See* High Court's report on the Administration of Criminal Justice in the province of Assam during the year 1938]

Staff. 50. The permanent Judicial staff employed on criminal work in Assam during the year consisted of two Sessions Judges, one Additional Sessions Judge, one Assistant Sessions Judge, eight District Magistrates, eighty-seven Subordinate Stipendiary Magistrates and twenty-three Honorary Magistrates. Besides these, one temporary Additional Sessions Judge worked in the Assam Valley throughout the year. Two Subordinate Judges vested with the powers of an Assistant Sessions Judge were also employed, *viz.*, one in the Assam Valley throughout the year exclusive of the civil court vacation, and the other at Sylhet for twenty-eight days.

Offences. 51. The following statement gives the principal statistics for the last three years :—

Year	Cases reported including those pending from previous year	Cases reported as true	Cases brought to trial	Percentage of persons convicted to persons tried
1	2	3	4	5
1938	55,378	41,325	29,939	31·58
1937	52,657	39,316	28,952	32·49
1936	54,351	40,315	28,867	31·55

Magistrate's Courts. 52. Including the cases committed to the Sessions, 29,684 cases were disposed of during the year.

The number of persons whose cases were decided was 52,491. Of these 16,397 or 31·2 per cent. were convicted. The percentage ratio of convictions to persons actually tried was 42·5 against 44·6 in 1937.

The number of witnesses examined was 74,306. Of the total number of witnesses who attended, 69·3 per cent. were discharged on the first day of trial. The total number detained more than three days was 1,093.

The aggregate amount of fines imposed fell from Rs.2,17,763 in the previous year to Rs.2,13,416. The total amount of fines realised, including arrears of previous years, was Rs.1,39,851, of which Rs.20,010 was paid as compensation to complainants.

Courts of Sessions. 53. The number of cases disposed of during the year was 357 against 348 in the previous year. The number of persons tried was 998. Of the persons tried, 486 were convicted and 487 were discharged or acquitted and the cases of 25 persons were referred for orders of the High Court. Sentence of death was passed on three persons in three cases. The High Court disposed of 3 cases involving 3 persons of whom 2 were sentenced to death and one was ordered to be retried.

Thirty-four persons were sentenced in the Sessions Court to transportation or penal servitude and 474 persons were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment or fine or were ordered to give security.

The number of witnesses examined was 3,434 against 3,339 in the previous year.

Appellate Jurisdiction (*i*) High Court. 54. Twenty appeals were pending before the High Court from the previous year, and 94 were preferred during the year. Of these, 105 were disposed of during the year, leaving 9 pending at its close. Of the appeals disposed of, 70 were summarily dismissed ; in 6 cases decisions of the lower courts were modified, in 20 confirmed and in 6 reversed, and 3 cases were remanded for retrial.

(*ii*) Courts of Sessions. 55. The number of appeals disposed of in the Courts of Sessions was 1,128 against 1,187 in the previous year. The number of persons involved was 2,029. The orders of the lower courts were confirmed in the case of 1,342 persons, modified in the case of 314 and reversed in the case of 365. The cases of 8 persons were otherwise disposed of.

56 The District Magistrates disposed of the appeals of 238 persons. Of these appeals, 121 or 50·8 per cent. were altogether unsuccessful, 66 or 27·7 per cent. obtained a reversal and in 32 or 13·5 per cent. a modification of their original sentences was obtained. The cases of 19 persons were otherwise disposed of. (iii) District Magistrates.

57. Applications for revision of orders passed by lower courts were decided by the High Court in 208 cases, by the Sessions Courts in 466 cases and by the District Magistrates in 166 cases. Revision.

58. The expenditure in the Criminal Courts amounted to Rs.6,30,392 and receipts to Rs.3,13,353. Compared with the figures of 1937, the charges show an increase of Rs.3,735 and the receipts a decrease of Rs.6,365. Receipts and Expenditure.

59. In the Hill Districts and Frontier Tracts there were 1,399 cases, in which 2,318 persons were tried. Of the persons tried, 1,463 were convicted and 855 acquitted or discharged. Hill Districts and Frontier Tracts.

60. The number of cases brought to trial was 668 of which 628 were decided and 40 remained pending at the close of the year. Shillong Division.

The number of witnesses examined was 1,117 and none was detained for more than three days.

Of the persons tried, 163 were acquitted or discharged and 543 were convicted. One person was committed to the Sessions and discharged on technical grounds. All the appeals and motions filed during the year have been disposed of.

The total amount of fines imposed was Rs.8,155 of which Rs.4,465 was realised and Rs.544 was paid as compensation.

The charges in the Criminal Courts amounted to Rs.786 and the receipts to Rs.9,929.

SECTION 5.—Jails

[*See* Report on the Jail Administration of Assam for the year ending the 31st December 1938]

61. The number of prisoners of all classes decreased from 3,361 at the end of the year 1937 to 3,161 at the close of 1938. The daily average number confined fell from 3,566 to 3,304 of whom 2,805 were convicts, 495 under-trials, 2 civil and 2 State prisoners. Population.

62. The number of persons imprisoned was 4,245 as compared with 4,466 in 1937. The percentage of Hindus and Sikhs rose from 54 to 55 while that of Muhammadans fell from 39 to 38. The percentage of prisoners under 21 years of age rose from 6·51 per cent. in 1937 to 6·79 per cent. in 1938. Habituals formed 16·94 per cent. of convict admissions, against 17·85 in 1937. The proportion of convicts to the free population of the province in 1938 was 1 to 2,179. Convicts.

63. Eighteen children under 16 years and 288 adolescents between 16 and 21 years of age were sentenced to imprisonment. Four children of under 16 years of age were transferred to the Hazaribagh Reformatory School for detention.

64. The daily average number of under-trials fell from 502·01 in 1937 to 495·52 in 1938. The average period of detention in Magistrates' cases rose from 20·6 days in 1937 to 21·23 days in 1938. Under-trials.

65. The number of civil prisoners was 60 in 1937 and 20 in 1938. Of the latter only one remained in custody at the end of the year. Civil Prisoners.

66. Out of 16,626 prisoners there was only one escape against 8 in the previous year. The escaped prisoner was recaptured. There was a small increase in the total number of offences committed by convicts, *viz.*, from 1,072 in 1937 to 1,074 in 1938. There were no whippings for jail offences. The revision of long-term sentences by Advisory Boards continued to result in a general raising of the standard of behaviour among long-term prisoners. Ninety-six convicts were prematurely released on the recommendation of these Boards. The Good Conduct Prisoners' Probational Release Act, 1938 was not brought into force and no action was taken under the Act during the year. Discipline.

The number of convicts who came under the remission system during the year rose from 1,944 in 1937 to 1,973 in 1938. None failed to earn remission. The average period of remission earned fell from 68 days in 1937 to 63 days in 1938.

Ten "B" Division prisoners whose offences had a political connection were prematurely released.

Protection.

Aid on discharge.

67. The Assam Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society continued its work. The financial aid given to 9 *ex*-convicts amounted to Rs.309 and an amount of Rs.99-6-0 was distributed on relief by the District Committees.

Education of convicts.

68. As in the previous year seven temporary teachers continued to give elementary instructions to prisoners of 30 years of age or under, and officers of the Education Department expressed themselves as satisfied with the teaching. A sum of Rs.300 was allotted for the improvement of jail libraries during the year.

Health.

69. The daily average of sick rose from 2·2 per cent. in 1937 to 2·3 per cent. in 1938 ; the total number of deaths rose from 55 to 64. Subdivisional medical officers were placed in combined medical and administrative charge of jails in all subdivisional headquarters, the system having been found satisfactory in experiment.

Finance.

70. The gross expenditure (excluding expenditure on buildings and forms) rose from Rs.3,95,736 to Rs.3,97,968. The average cost per head increased from Rs.110-15-8 to Rs.120-7-2. There was a great decrease in the earnings of jail labour due to the abolition of the system of oil pressing by convicts, the fall in prison population and accumulation of raw materials in stock at the end of the year. The net cost of maintenance rose from Rs.3,66,384 to Rs.3,76,565 and the average net cost per head of average strength rose from Rs.102-12-0 in 1937 to Rs.113-8-0 in 1938.

SECTION 6.—Civil Justice

[*See* High Court's report on the Administration of Civil Justice in the Province of Assam during the year 1938.]

Staff.

71. The permanent Civil Judicial Staff of the Province consisted of two District Judges, one Additional District Judge, nine Subordinate Judges and twenty-three Munsifs. Both the District Judges, one Additional District Judge, two Subordinate Judges and nine Munsifs were members of the Bengal cadre and the others were officers of the Assam cadres. In addition to the permanent staff one temporary Additional District Judge, two temporary Additional Subordinate Judges and one temporary Additional Munsif were entertained during the year.

Suit.

72. The number of original suits instituted in the Province was 35,917 against 33,845 in the previous year. Of the total number of suits instituted 17,924 were suits for money or moveables, 13,327 were rent suits and 4,666 title and other suits. The number of suits valued at sums not exceeding Rs.100 was 28,151. Out of 47,960 suits for disposal 36,457, excluding transfers, were disposed of during the year, a fall of 3,442 from 1937. The number of suits pending over one year fell from 294 to 174, but the total pending file rose from 8,907 to 9,654.

Of the suits disposed of, 4,539 were fully tried, the remaining 31,918 ending in compromise, arbitration, *ex-parte* decision, etc. Of the suits decided after full trial, 75·5 per cent. resulted in favour of the plaintiffs.

Miscellaneous cases.

73. There were 5,977 miscellaneous cases of a judicial nature, of which, excluding transfers, 4,866 were disposed of and 835 remained pending at the close of the year.

Appeals.

74. Of the 518 appeals for disposal, 195 were decided by the High Court, 158 being appeals from decrees and 37 appeals from orders.

(*a*) In the High Court.

75. Of the appeals decided, 81 were summarily rejected, 6 were dismissed for default, 4 were compromised and the order of the lower courts was affirmed in 69 cases, reversed in 18 and varied in 7 ; while 10 cases were remanded for rehearing. The number of appeals pending at the close of the year was 323.

(*b*) In Courts Subordinate to the High Court.

76. Excluding transfers, there were 1,915 appeals before the Civil Appellate Courts in the Province and of this number 1,589 were disposed of. The decisions of the lower courts were affirmed in 899 cases, modified in 221 and reversed in 294 cases ; 115 appeals were dismissed or not prosecuted and the other cases were remanded to the lower courts. At the close of the year 326 cases remained pending.

Receipts and Expenditure.

77. The receipts in the Civil Courts rose from Rs.7,79,536 in 1937 to Rs.8,31,933 in 1938 and the expenditure rose from Rs.4,34,775 to Rs.4,64,129. The expenditure figures represent direct charges only and are exclusive of such items as the cost of maintenance of Government buildings, salaries of Extra Assistant Commissioners, Munsifs and pensionary charges.

78. In the Hill Districts and Frontier Tracts the number of suits fell from 1,182 to 936 and their value from Rs.1,99,113 to Rs.1,42,758. Hill Districts and Frontier Tracts.

The total number of appeals for disposal was 91, of which 24 were summarily dismissed or withdrawn and 11 remained pending at the close of the year. In the 56 cases not decided summarily the decisions of the lower courts were affirmed in 33, reversed in 6 and modified in 16, and 1 case was remanded to the lower court for rehearing.

SECTION 7.—Registration

[*See* Report on the working of the Registration Department of the Province of Assam for the year ending 31st December 1938, Report on the working of the Assam Moslem Marriages and Divorces Registration Act, 1935, the Kazis Act of 1880 and the Special Marriage Act of 1872 for the year 1938.]

79. The number of offices at work at the close of the year was 45 against 41 in the previous year. Registration General.

80. The number of documents registered decreased from 100,667 to 98,709 and their aggregate value increased from Rs.1,51,23,919 to Rs.1,63,77,697. The decrease in the number of documents registered was due to bad economic condition and slump in money-lending business and increase in the value was due to the registration of deeds of high value. Documents.

81. Receipts and expenditure increased from Rs.1,63,732 to Rs.1,66,278 and from Rs.1,3 ,372 to Rs.1,42,138 respectively. Receipts and Expenditure.

82. The number of offices at work was 48 as in the previous year. The number of ceremonies registered under the Assam Act IX of 1935 was 8,328 against 7,832 in the previous year. Moslem Marriages and Divorces Registration Act.

SECTION 8.—Municipal Administration

[*See* Resolution reviewing the Report on the Working of Municipalities in Assam during the year 1938-39, Statistics of British India, Volume IV.]

There was no change in the number or constitution of the municipal institutions. Habiganj continued, as in the previous year, to be under supersession and a similar fate overtook Sylhet after years of mal-administration.

Section 12 of the Assam Municipal Act was amended by Act III of 1939 to facilitate the testing of electoral qualifications with reference to a prescribed date. The rules prescribing the imposition of mooring fees promulgated during the previous year could not be taken advantage of as the extension of boundaries of the Municipalities concerned to mid-stream to implement these rules could not be effected.

The number of meetings held during the year fell from 322 to 308 in the Assam Valley, while it rose from 152 to 164 in the Surma Valley. The number of meetings which proved abortive for want of the requisite quorum stood at 20 against 17 and that of meetings adjourned at 28 against 29. Of the total number of meetings adjourned, Gauhati is responsible for as many as 11. The average percentage of attendance of non-official members fell from 70 to 68 in the Assam Valley and from 68·40 to 60 in the Surma Valley while that of "expert advisers" rose from 7 to 12 in the Assam Valley but fell from 25·29 to 19 in the Surma Valley. Shillong and Dibrugarh hold the best record in this respect each with a percentage of 75 while Nowgong is at the other end of the scale with a percentage of 53. Among the small towns Nalbari heads the list with a percentage of 85.

The total income, excluding grants from provincial revenues and opening balances, etc., shows a fall from Rs.6,13,391 to Rs.5,97,062 in the Assam Valley, but an increase from Rs.4,66,882 to Rs. 4,79,394 in the Surma Valley. The fall in the case of the former is specially noticeable under the head " Fees and revenues from markets and slaughter houses " while in that of the latter the increase is under the head " Total rates and taxes ". Contributions from provincial revenues amounted to Rs.1,25,219 against Rs.1,38,71 in the Assam Valley and to Rs.84,563 against Rs.87,240 in the Surma Valley and include compensatory grants for loss of revenue due to the provincialisation of the tax on motor vehicles. The large decrease under this head in the case of the Assam Valley is mostly accounted for by the inclusion in the previous year's total of the special grant of Rs. 16,000 to the Tezpur Board towards the cost of an improved water-supply for the Mental Hospital and Jail.

Protection.

The total expenditure, excluding repayment of loans, etc., shown a fall from Rs. 7,37,894 to Rs. 7,23,212 in the Assam Valley and from Rs. 5,71,729 to Rs. 5,63,331 in the Surma Valley.

No loan was granted during the year.

The financial position of the Municipal institutions continued to be bad as in the previous year. The position of Sylhet and Gauhati ; in particular, was desperate, but the change of executive towards the end of the year in the case of the former helped it to close the year with much better prospects. The institution on the date of its supersession, *i.e.*, 10th February 1939, had outstanding taxes to the extent of Rs.56,105, liabilities of Rs. 35,015 and a cash balance of Rs.212 only but it was possible for the official executive to reduce by the end of the year outstanding taxes to Rs.20,335 and liabilities to Rs.18,511 and to raise the cash balance to the extent of Rs. 9,406. Gauhati had a net liability at the end of the year covering about 47 per cent. of its demand inspite of the collection standing at 99·92 per cent. Apart from this the establishment could not be paid regularly; neither could it pay the employees' subscription to the Provident Fund nor its share of the contributions to the Postal Savings Bank in time. In spite of all this it dragged on the revaluation work and inordinately delayed proposals for extending the town which, if completed in time, would have increased its resources. It whittled down the valuation made by the official assessor lent by Government for the purpose at the cost of the general tax-payer and appointed one of its own choice—eventually a member of the Board — in utter disregard of its responsibilities in the matter of improving its resources and liquidating its debts about which complaints are received frequently by Government.

Tezpur Municipal Board deserves special mention as the outstanding at the end of the year amounted to only Rs.70 and remission less than one per cent.

SECTION 9.—Local Boards

[*See* Resolution on the working of Local Boards for the year ending on the 31st March 1939 and Statistics of British India, Volume IV.]

Constitution. 84. The year under report was the first year of working of the newly-elected Boards. During the year there was no change in the number or in the constitution of the Boards. With the North Lakhimpur Board replacing its official Chairman by a non-official one, all the Local Boards in the province are now being presided over by non-officials. Two of the non-official Chairmen were appointed by Government while the rest were elected by members of the Boards.

The number of meetings—ordinary or special—of the Boards in both the Valleys showed an increase and the percentage of attendance of non-officials increased from the neighbourhood of about 70 to over 80. This may indicate the usual enthusiasm on the part of members new to their responsibilities. The attendance of official supernumerary members was disappointing in many Boards.

Finance. 85. While the Boards as a class continued to be in a state of financial stagnation, the Boards in Sylhet district in particular have, by the action of the representatives of the people of that district in the Legislature in repealing the Assam Local Rates (Amendment) Act, been compelled to reduce their expenditure on many of their activities and some of them, namely, Sunamganj and Habiganj, were unable even to maintain the minimum closing balance. The expenditure under "General Administration" shows a rise. This is partly due to the action of certain members of a Board tendering resignations and the Chairmen concerned accepting them—both the parties acting in a huff. Then there is the amount of travelling allowance drawn by members and officers of several Boards. As regards receipts, Government commend to the notice of all the example of the Boards in Goalpara district which voted for an increase in the rate of local rates under the Assam Local Rates Regulation from one anna to one anna and three pies per rupee of the annual value and have for some years past been doing good work with the additional income thus derived. As Goalpara contains both permanent and temporarily-settled lands this example can be followed by other Boards deriving income from permanent or temporarily-settled areas. In the case of the latter areas the present moment is particularly opportune as the villagers who have received substantial reduction in land revenue will not grudge paying an extra pice per rupee of the annual value. This measure by itself would increase income under "Provincial rates" which is by far the most important source of income of the Boards by nearly 25 per cent.

86. Middle English Schools decreased by one in each Valley and there was when the year closed a prospect of a further decrease in the Surma Valley. Middle vernacular schools on the other hand showed a net increase of 4 in the Assam Valley and 5 in the Surma Valley. On the North Sylhet Board deciding to abolish seven middle vernacular Schools, Government withdrew the grant made to the Board for secondary education and decided to give a direct grant-in-aid to the schools in question. The primary schools for boys and girls recorded a further increase of 147 in the Assam Valley and 76 in the Surma Valley. This increase was rendered possible primarily by the Government grants for taking over venture schools. Education.

87. The number of dispensaries increased by 2—one under the Gauhati Local Board and the other under the Dibrugarh Local Board. The Goalpara Local Board partly by private subscriptions and donations and partly by Government help added a maternity ward to their hospital in Goalpara and the Dhubri Board was responsible for instituting a paying ward in the Dhubri hospital. Medical and Sanitation.

Outbreaks of cholera in the lower parts of the Assam Valley and the Surma Valley necessitated a greater expenditure on the part of Boards concerned on measures taken to combat them. *Kala azar* showed signs of recrudescense in Golaghat and the Public Health Department had to come to the aid of the Board and assume control of the situation. As regards leprosy, the experience in Barpeta showed that ventures undertaken in haste and without sufficient thought to finances do little good. Even the Gauhati Institution though supported by the Board is not without its troubles.

Apart from vaccination, the main activity under sanitation lies in providing water-supply. Progress under this head was rendered possible only by the Government of India's grant for rural uplift. Tanks, ring-wells and tube-wells whichever were considered suitable in the localities concerned have been constructed. The responsibility for their maintenance after erection and epuipment must fall on the local body looking after the localities in question. It is essential that efforts should be made to see that a record of these tanks and wells is framed and maintained up-to-date by periodical inspections. Government cannot help remarking that village authorities would be useful in taking up this work.

88. The expenditure on communications fell from Rs.5,82,455 to Rs.5,77,410 in the Assam Valley and from Rs.2,24,102 to Rs.1,46,334 in the Surma Valley. Public Works.

89. Though there was increasing appreciation of the works done by Veterinary doctors, there was no increase in the number of veterinary dispensaries. Only Nowgong Board proposed to add two dispensaries if the villagers did their own part. There were epidemics in lower Assam as an aftermath of the floods and the brunt of the work was as usual borne by the Government Veterinary Department. The problem of maintaining the vitality of cattle in the areas liable to innundations is one for the Departments of Agriculture, Livestock and Veterinary to solve. Government propose to explore the suggestion of compulsory inoculation as a preventive measure against rinderpest which is responsible for the loss of so many cattle every year. Veterinary.

90. The audit of the accounts of all the Boards in the Surma Valley and of some of those in the Assam Valley was conducted during the year. Speaking generally, the Examiner, Local Accounts, considers that the accounts are not unsatisfactory. Slackness in realising the Boards dues continues and some cases of misappropriation of dues collected were detected but unfortunately met with no adequate punishment. In these matters it is incumbent on the officers of the Boards to keep constant vigilance on the staff to see that dues are promptly collected and duly credited and to come down heavily on dishonest persons and, in doing this duty, they have the right to look to the members of the Boards for support. The development and maintenance of a clean financial conscience is the first requisite of successful management of public funds and institutions. Audit.

Protection.

General.

91. The Boards are meant for the benefit of the public at large and the amount of good that they are capable of doing depends on the degree of devotion of its members to public welfare. Conservation of and increase in the sources of income, expenditure on the basis of the relative needs of the localities and control of expenditure to prevent wastage are all matters which require the members' individual attention. The more members there are who go to the Board with the intention of "giving" without any thought of "taking" anything from the Board, the more chance there is of the public being served well. Government have drawn the attention of the Boards outside Goalpara district to the obvious fact that the only hope of progress lies in increasing their income. The manner in which this can be done has already been indicated. Should any Board pass a resolution to the effect that the rate of local rates be raised from the existing level of ane anna to one anna and three pies within the subdivision concerned, Government would be glad to implement it.

Production and Distribution.

CHAPTER IV

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

SECTION 1.—Agriculture and Horticulture

[*See* the Report of the Department of Agriculture for the year 1938-39.]

92. Dr. Mitra was in charge of the Department throughout the year. Dr. H. K. Nandi was in charge of the Botanical Section throughout the whole year. The superior staff of the Department consisted of the Director of Agriculture, 4 Deputy Directors of Agriculture (1 each for the Surma Valley, Lower Assam Valley and Upper Assam Valley and one for the Livestock Section), 2 Economic Botanists and 2 Superintendents of Agriculture. The Economic Botanist, Assam, continued to be in charge of the chemical, mycological and entomological sections, in addition to his own duties, while the other Economic Botanist was in charge of the Deep Water Paddy Research Farm at Habiganj (partly financed by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research). One of the Superintendents of Agriculture held the post of the Marketing Officer, Assam, and the other was placed on special duty for supervising the demonstration of the cultivation of *boro* paddy on *amon* land under mechanical irrigation. The post of Deputy Director of Agriculture, Lower Assam Valley, was abolished with effect from 1st February 1939. There were 26 Agricultural Inspectors (as against 25 of the previous year) including one Fruit Inspector, one Inspector of Government Gardens and 5 Agricultural Inspectors, Livestock. There were also 2 Agricultural Instructors. There were 6 permanent Farm Managers and the number of permanent Scientific Assistants continued to be five, *viz.*, one each for the chemical, entomological and mycological and two for the botanical sections. The Entomological Assistant, temporarily placed in the Surma Valley during the previous year, continued to work there and the following temporary staff continued to work at the Deep Water Paddy Research Station, Habiganj and the Sugarcane Research Station, Jorhat (both partly financed by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research) :— Staff.

One Chemical Assistant,
Two Botanical Assistants,
One Farm Manager,
Two Assistant Farm Managers,
One Botanical Field Assistant and 5 field men.

There were 78 Agricultural Demonstrators (as against 76 of the previous year) including 4 temporary Demonstrators for terraced rice cultivation. During the year under report, a temporary staff consisting of 2 Jute Inspectors and 5 Jute Demonstrators were appointed for jute development work to be carried on with funds provided by the Indian Central Jute Committee.

93. Owing to uneven distribution of rainfall the season, on the whole, was not quite favourable for crops. Local floods of short duration, droughts and insects also caused some damage to autumn and winter rice crops. In the beginning, the weather for jute was generally fair but afterwards a high flood occurred in the Assam Valley, which damaged the crop severely in certain districts. General.

The weather for *rabi* crops and spring rice was not quite satisfactory due to drought at the sowing time. Insects too caused some damage.

Cultivation of rice, rape, mustard and jute increased while there was a slight decrease, under sugarcane and tea in comparison with the previous year.

The average yield per acre of all crops showed a slight decrease as compared with that of the previous year.

Price of agricultural produce generally showed a gradual improvement as compared with that of last year.

During the year under report agricultural marketing survey reports on the following commodities were submitted to the Agricultural Marketing Adviser to the Government of India :—coffee, mustard and rape, potato, ghee and butter, rice (Chapter IV-XIII), sheep and goat, co-operative marketing of agricultural produce, maize, barley, mango and cocoanut. Supplementary information regarding commodities on which reports were submitted previously were also supplied. As an experimental measure marketing of Assam pineapples in Calcutta was taken up with considerable success. Researches and experiments on paddy were

continued at the Paddy Experiment Stations at Titabar, Karimganj and Habiganj and those on sugarcane at the Sugarcane Research Station at Jorhat. Experiments on fruits were conducted mainly at the Fruit Experiment Station at Shillong. The scheme for researches on citrus fruits financed partially by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research was started in September 1938. Importance of improved seeds, seedlings, etc., is being increasingly realised by the cultivators.

During the year under report two stipendiaries were sent to the Agricultural Institute, Allahabad and including the 2 stipendiaries sent in 1937-38, there were 4 stipendiaries undergoing training there in Agriculture. The work of the agricultural Training Classes at Sylhet and Jorhat continued as usual.

Farms. 94. Experiments and Researches on paddy were continued at the Habiganj, Karimganj and Titabar Farms and those on sugarcane at the Jorhat Farm. Researches on potatoes and fruits were conducted mainly at the Upper Shillong Farm and the Shillong Fruits Station, respectively. Cattle breeding operations were continued at the Upper Shillong Farm, the Sylhet and Khanapara Cattle Breeding Farms and in the cattle section of the Jorhat Farm.

Demonstration. 95. Demonstrations as usual with crops, such as paddy, pulses, potato, sugarcane and oil-seeds, were carried out more extensively during the year under report than during any previous years. The cultivation of *boro* paddy on precarious *amon* tracts under irrigation continued successfully during the year. Quite a large area was also cropped by means of irrigation from *khals* and with water compounded by bunds. The temporary staff appointed for jute development work, financed by the Indian Central Jute Committee, duly continued their work during the year under report.

Seed Depôts. 96. The Seed Depots at Sylhet, Jorhat and Gauhati continued to function and a total of 173,953 lbs. of paddy seeds, 95,047 lbs. of seed potato, more than 26,645 packets of vegetable seeds and 79,841 sugarcane setts were issued. A considerable amount of manure and some implements were also issued.

Livestock. 97. The activities of the livestock section, the co-operative milk societies and the jail dairies continued as before. Johne's disease was brought under definite control and it did not prove to be a source of any serious danger. Six new village cattle breeding centres were started during the year under review.

The Livestock Improvement Association was in its second year. Subscription realised from members of the Association was very poor and the programme of work had to be much curtailed for shortage of funds. At the end of the year there were 22 branches, with a membership of 814.

SECTION 2.—Co-operative Societies

[*See* Report on the Working of Co-operative Societies for 1938-39]

Strength. 98. The number of Societies of all types registered during the year was 83 against 73 of the preceding year. Twenty-seven Societies (22 Agricultural Credit, 1 Non-agricultural Credit and 4 Milk Societies) were sent into liquidation giving a net increase of 56 societies. Thus the number of societies of all kinds increased from 1,495 to 1,551 but the membership decreased from 62,425 to 61,624. The total working capital of all the Societies also decreased further from Rs.90,20,280 to Rs.88,25,203.

Provincial and Central Banks. 99. The working capital of the Provincial Bank was Rs.3,85,337 against Rs.3,67,186 in the previous year and the number of Societies affiliated to it increased from 51 to 53. Loans issued to the societies during the year amounted to Rs.71,292 against Rs.1,01,500 and the total loans outstanding against societies amounted to Rs.2,80,708 against Rs.2,61,098 in the previous year.

There were 18 Central Banks as in the previous year. The number of societies affiliated to them increased from 1,191 to 1,230, but the individual members decreased from 674 to 647. The total working capital of these banks decreased from Rs.23,56,745 to Rs.23,07,355 though the paid-up share capital increased from Rs.1,94,070 to Rs.1,95,409. The loans issued to the affiliated societies during the year amounted to Rs.55,679 against Rs.66,326 in the previous year.

100. The total number of these societies increased from 1,299 to 1,334 but the number of members fell from 42,383 to 41,189 and the working capital from Rs.30,34,776 to Rs.28,69,283. Agricultural Credit Societies.

101. The number of Non-agricultural Credit Societies increased from 112 to 136 and that of the members from 13,337 to 13,614. Their working capital also increased from Rs.26,42,249 to Rs.26,56,971. Loans to members issued during the year amounted to Rs.8,63,835 against Rs.8,78,124 in the previous year. Non-Agricultural Credit Societies.

102. There was no change in the policy of the Department and the movement passed through another year of struggle for its existence. It seems that the present economic condition of people caused by the general depression has deterred the progress of the movement. The Assam Money Lenders' Act and the Debt Conciliation Act are also responsible for the deterioration of the movement to some extent. General.

SECTION 3.—Weather and Crops

103. Owing to uneven distribution of rainfall the season, on the whole, was not quite favourable for crops. Local floods of short duration, droughts and insects also caused some damage to autumn and winter rice crops. In the beginning, the weather for jute was generally fair but afterwards a high flood occurred in the Assam Valley, which damaged the crop severely in certain districts. Weather.

The weather for rabi crops and spring rice was not quite satisfactory due to drought at the sowing time. Insects too caused some damage.

104. The area under rice was 5,351,506 acres showing an increase of 295,183 acres over that in the previous year. The total area under tea during the year ending 31st March 1939 was 439,089 acres. The area under rape and mustard was 405,730 acres as against 397,159 acres in the last year. The area under foodgrains including pulses increased from 244,752 acres to 259,132 acres and that under jute from 219,122 acres to 302,628 acres. The area under sugarcane decreased from 39,197 acres to 38,542 acres and that under fruits and vegetables, from 462,609 acres to 461,204 acres. Crops.

105. The percentages on normal outturn of autumn and winter rice per acre were estimated at 71 and 82 respectively against 84 and 89 in the preceding year. The outturn of rape and mustard was 80 per cent. of the normal per acre, of sugarcane 82 and of jute 54 against 79·84 and 85 per cent. respectively in the preceding year. On the basis of these estimates, the Provincial outturns are shown below:— Outturn.

Crops	Outturn 1937-38	Outturn 1938-39
	Tons.	Tons.
Rice	1,744,800	1,742,100
Rape and mustard	59,200	68,000
Sugarcane	40,500	37,400
Jute	654,600*	569,800*
Tea	107,800	116.500

* In bales of 400 lbs each.

106. The prices of agricultural produce generally showed a gradual improvement as compared with that of last year. Prices.

Production and Distribution.

SECTION 4.—Forests

[*See* Progress Report of Forest Administration in the Province of Assam for the year 1938-39]

Area and settlement.

107. The area of reserved and protected forests rose very slightly from 6,511 square miles to 6,514 square miles owing to afforestation and disforestation in certain divisions.

Working plans.

The advantages gained by the transfer of the Working Plan Officer to Shillong in June 1937 have again been clearly demonstrated by the rapid progress which has been made in the branch during the year. The revised Working Plans for Kachugaon and Haltugaon Divisions were completed in June 1939 and a preliminary survey of the Garo Hills has also been made. The Working Plan of the Sylhet Division was introduced on the 1st April 1938. A preliminary report for the Garo Hills has been prescribed and a Working Plan programme laid down for the next four years.

Communications and buildings.

108. A sum of Rs.38,459 was spent on the maintenance of 1,106¼ miles of roads and bridges. A sum of Rs.1,331 was spent in new work on 49 miles of roads and paths against Rs.1,098 in the previous year.

The total revenue earned by the Goalpara Tramway was Rs.55,712 against an expenditure of Rs.30,007. During the year the tramway carried 234,900 cubic feet of timber as against 228,511 cubic feet in the previous year. A length of about one mile of Tramway line was laid as siding on the east bank of the Hel river to tap the Singimajli Block. The length of the permanent line remains the same.

Rupees 16,201 was spent on the construction of new buildings as against Rs.15,371 in the previous year. Rupees 40,982 was spent upon repairs to buildings.

Silviculture.

109. There has been a good deal of energy displayed, a large amount of work done and great interest taken in the natural regeneration of *sal*. Early burning of grass and leaf in the cold weather, canopy manipulations and rainstending were done in a scientific way as in the previous year. Rainstending is carried out during the hottest and most humid season of the year during which in old days the staff spent comparatively little time inside the forests. Remarkable progress has been made in the second stage in Darrang, Nowgong, Garo Hills and Kamrup where rains-weeding and fire protection has established regeneration at small cost. Now that these principles have been better understood there has sprung up a healthy competition among Divisional Officers in *sal* Divisions.

The success attained in evergreen regeneration in the Jaipur experiment has been continued and a new area opened in Powai in the Upper Dehing Reserve, East Block.

110. The creation of plantations and *taungyas* has developed into a regular routine.

Financial result.

Due to restrictions of the cut under Working Plans and the poor *sal* log market in Cachar, Haltugaon, Sylhet, Kamrup, Kachugaon, Darrang and the Garo Hills Divisions the receipt during the year fell from Rs.17,50,720 to Rs.16,69,298.

General.

111. Elephant catching operations were carried out in several districts. In all 395 elephants were caught, 15 died and 42 were released. A royalty of about Rs.63,000 was realised as against Rs.40,000 in the previous year. One young male rhinoceros was captured near Kaziranga Game sanctuary and was sold to the Washington Zoo for Rs.4,000 F. O. R. Calcutta.

The royalty on 25,586 maunds of lac during the year amounted to Rs.25,569 against Rs.21,984 on 14,863 maunds of lac of the previous year.

Preservation of wild life.

112. Sanctuaries were satisfactorily controlled and the Fauna are now well protected and the stock is increasing. The revised shooting rules came into force from the 1st June 1938. The rules have been framed to preserve animals and b rds in the Reserve and yet at the same time to afford facilities for shooting at reasonable rates.

SECTION 5.—Manufactures and Mines

113. Receipts from mineral oil during the year were Rs.6,76,550 against Rs.5,80,387 in the previous year and those from coal mines were Rs.86,688 against Rs.50,598 in the preceding year.

SECTION 6.—Factories

[*See* the Annual Report on the Working of the Factories Act, 1934, in Assam for the year 1938]

114. There were 783 factories in the register against 756 in the previous year. During the year under review 34 new factories were added and 7 removed from the register. Of these 113 were perennial and 670 seasonal factories.

The average daily number of workers in the registered factories was 50,677 against 48,525 in the previous year, *i.e.*, an increase of 2,152. The adult males and females increased and the adolescents and children decreased the changes being mainly in seasonal factories.

The number of certifying surgeons at the close of the year under review was 51 in the Assam Valley and 19 in the Surma Valley, an increase of 3 and 2 in each Valley respectively on the figures of 1937. The number of children certified was 449 and of those rejected 37 against 510 and 88 in the previous year respectively. The adolescents certified was 710 and rejected 39 against 1,307 and 80 respectively in the previous year.

The total number of accidents in the factories was 551 against 528 in the previous year. Of these, there were 5 fatal, 102 involved serious and 444 slight injuries, compared with 3 fatal cases, 74 serious and 451 slight injuries respectively in the previous year.

Ten prosecutions were undertaken during the year under report and in all cases convictions were secured.

A trade dispute was apprehended between the Assam Oil Company Ltd., and the Assam Oil Company Labour Union and other employees of the said Company at Digboi and Tinsukia. With the consent of the parties concerned, Government appointed a Court of Enquiry consisting of the Commissioner, Assam Valley Division as Chairman and two members of the Legislative Assembly as members. The Court held its first sitting at Digboi on the 16th August 1938 and submitted its report to Government on 7th January 1939, which was published for general information on the 9th February 1939.

There was no change in the Staff of the Inspectorate during the year under report.

SECTION 7.—Workmen's Compensation

115. During the year under report Rs.28,567-7-9 was paid as compensation to the dependents of deceased workmen and to workmen permanently and temporarily disabled. Out of this amount Rs.15,090-9-3 was paid through Commissioners and Rs.13,476-14-6 by employers direct. Besides, the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, received Rs.1,559-14-0 from the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, and a sum of Rs.2,400-0-0 from the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal, for payment to the dependants of certain deceased workmen and the payment was made during the year. The Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, transferred a sum of Rs.7,197-15-0 to other Commissioners for Workmen's Compensation for payment.

SECTION 8.—Boilers

[*See* the Annual Report on the Working of the Indian Boilers Act, 1923 (Act V of 1923), in Assam for the year 1938-39.]

116. The total number of boilers in the registers on the 31st March 1939 was 956 against 963 in the previous year. The number of boilers condemned by the Department and discarded by the owners was 18 only. Eight hundred and thirty-five boilers were inspected for renewal of certificates during the year. Mr. L. F. Ballantine temporary Inspector was replaced by Mr. J. M. Nath, permanent Inspector, on the 1st June 1938.

SECTION 9.—Maritime Trade

Nil.

SECTION 10.—Rail and River-borne Trade

Nil.

SECTION 11.—Frontier Trade

Nil.

SECTION 12.—Public Works

I.—DIRECTION

117. The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla, Kt., M.A., B.L., remained in charge from the beginning of the year up to the 20th September, 1938; the Hon'ble Babu Kamini Kumar Sen, B.L., from the 20th September 1938 to the 19th October 1938 and the Hon'ble Maulavi Ali Haidar Khan from the 20th October 1938 till the end of the year. Public Works Department portfolio.

118. Mr. G. Reid Shaw, I.S.E. (now deceased), held charge of the office of the Chief Engineer and Secretary to Government in the Public Works Department from the beginning of the year up to the 1st June 1938. His sudden death, after brief illness, created a vacancy, and it was filled up by Mr. Ali Secretariat.

Production and Distribution.

Ahmed, I.S.E., Superintendiug Engineer, from the 2nd June 1938 to 24th October 1938, when Mr. K. E. L. Pennell, on return from leave, took over. Mr. Pennell remained in charge till the end of the year.

Mr. G. W. Gordon, B.SC., I.S.E., held the post of Assistant Chief Engineer and Under-Secretary to Government in the Public Works Department, throughout the year, and similarly Mr. Anath Bandhu Dutt held the post of Registrar.

Superintending Engineers.

119. The charge of the Northern Circle was held by Mr. Ali Ahmed, I.S.E., from the beginning of the year up to the 3rd June 1938 ; Mr. F. E. Cormack, I.S.E., held it from the 4th June 1938 to the 5th February 1939 and Mr. A. A. Barnard, B.E., O.B.E., I.S.E., from the 6th February 1939 till the close of the year.

The charge of the Southern Circle was held by Mr. F. E. Cormack, I.S.E., from the beginning of the year up to the 3rd June 1938 and by Mr. A. A. Barnard, B.E., O.B.E., I.S.E., from the 4th June 1938 until the year closed.

For the period from the 6th February 1939 to 31st March 1939, Mr. Barnard held combined charge of both the Circles.

Assam Engineering Service.

120. A new service called the Assam Engineering Service (Class I and Class II) was constituted with effect from the 1st August 1938 in Public Works Department Notification No. 122-E., dated the 18th July 1938, in replacement of the Indian Service of Engineers, recruitment whereof had ceased for several years, and of the existing Assam Engineering Service.

Revenue and Expenditure

Revenue and Expenditure.

121. Excluding a sum of Rs.3,44,696 transferred from the Central Road Development account, the total revenue realised under various heads in the Public Works Department amounted to Rs.7,03,215 against Rs.6,82,754 in the previous year. The total expenditure during 1938-39 under all provincial heads amounted to Rs.44,68,460, of which Rs.3,82,947 was spent on Original Works, Rs.26,39,811 on Repairs, Rs.9,20,041 on Establishment and Rs.73,021 on Tools and Plant. Rupees 4,52,640 represented other expenditure, suspense, etc. The expenditure under various heads was distributed as follows :—

Heads 1	Works 2	Repairs 3	Establishment 4	Tools and plant 5	Other expenditure, suspense, etc 6	Total 7
PROVINCIAL	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Civil Works—						
Buildings	1,02,333	3,89,171	..	..	..	..
	4,91,504					
Communications—						
Petrol Tax Fund	2,48,980		..		..	..
Provincial Revenues	23,841	21,94,327	..		..	..
Total—Communications ..	2,72,821	21,94,327	9,01,842	71,642	4,45,229	..
	24,67,148					
Miscellaneous	—2	5,786	..		..	..
(Total—Civil Works) ..	3,75,152	25,89,284	9,01,842	71,642	4,45,229	43,83,149
Public Health	4,252	6,657	3,469	263	..	14,641
	10,909					
Navigation, Embankment and Drainage works.	2,265	43,277	14,483	1,099	7,411	68,535
	45,542					
Deposit Works	1,278	593	247	17	..	2,135
	1,871					
Total—Provincial ..	3,82,947	26,39,811	9,20,041	73,021	4,52,640	44,68,460

Central Road Fund

Production and Distribution.

Road Fund

122. Since the inauguration of the Central Road Fund, the following grants have been received :—

Year	Allotments	
	General Fund	Reserve Fund
	Rs.	Rs.
1929-30	1,81,333	Nil.
1930-31	1,93,574	17,000
1931-32	2,25,588	1,45,901
1932-33	2,05,363	50,196
1933-34	2,30,477	70,863
1934-35	2,43,850	82,485
1935-36	2,71,325	10,45,438
1936-37	2,98,007	15,79,564
1937-38	3,26,739	6,39,641
1938-39	1,50,000(*a*)	1,22,259
Total	23,26,256	37,53,747

(*a*) Provisional allotment for first six months.

Improvement of Road Communications

New programme of road improvements.

123. Out of the Programme of Road Improvement estimated to cost Rs.1,06,75,000, the Assam Communications Board in 1937-38 selected 11 projects estimated to cost Rs.24,90,000 for prior attention. Twelve more projects estimated at Rs.7,25,000 were subsequently selected for similar attention during the year. These proposals were submitted to the Government of India and all were approved by them. A complete list of all the 23 projects is given below :—

Serial No.	Description of project	Amount approved by the Government of India	Anticipated expenditure
1	2	3	4
	LAKHIMPUR DIVISION	Rs.	Rs.
1	Rebuilding Doom-Dooma bridge in mile 318 of the Assam Trunk Road.	60,000	44,000
	CENTRAL ASSAM DIVISION		
2	Bridging the Khandajan and Bornadi in Mangaldai Subdivision.	70,000	89,449
3	Bridging the Borgang in Darrang district and construction of the consequent 10¾ mile road diversion.	3,00,000	2,80,000

Production and Distribution.

Serial No.	Description of project	Amount approved by the Government of India	Anticipated expenditure
1	2	3	4
	WESTERN ASSAM DIVISION	Rs.	Rs.
4	Improving the North Trunk Road from Dumnichawki *via* Moramanas to Garubhasa.	8,00,000	8,00,000
5	Improving the Nalbari-Hajo Amingaon Road ...	75,000	75,000
6	Improving the Sorbhog Feeder Road	10,000	10,000
7	Improving the Sorupeta Feeder Road	8,000	8,000
8	Improving the Garubhasa-Kokrajhar-Phutkibari-Bilashipara-Gauripur Road.	1,17,000	1,17,000
	LOWER ASSAM DIVISION		
9	Improving the Hojai-Doboka Road	60,000	60,000
10	Replacing timber bridges on the Assam Trunk Road west of Gauhati.	2,70,000	2,70,000
11	Replacing timber bridges on the Nowgong-Kampur road.	1,00,000	63,360
12	Improving the Damra-Dalgoma road	1,10,000	1,10,000
13	Constructing a road between Lakhipur and Mankachar	1,00,000	1,00,000
14	Improving the Palashbari-Loharghat Road	50,000	50,000
	SYLHET DIVISION		
15	Improving the Srimangal-Shaistaganj-Teliapara road section A, Srimangal to Shaistaganj.	3,00,000	3,74,000
16	Improving the Sylhet-Sunamganj road	4,00,000	5,00,000
17	Bridging the Manu at Maulvibazar	1,20,000	2,00,000
18	Improving the portion of the Shillong-Sylhet road within Sylhet Municipal area from the end of the Public Works Department road up to Keane Bridge.	22,000	42,000
	CACHAR DIVISION		
19	Improving the approach road to Earle Bridge, Karimganj	20,000	18,000
20	Construction of a bridge over the Dhaleswari river on the Cachar Trunk Road.	75,000	60,000
21	Construction of a bridge over the Katakhal river at Matijuri on the Silchar-Hailakandi road.	1,00,000	1,00,000
22	Improving the feeder road to Juri Railway Station ...	8,000	8,000
23	Widening Earle Bridge, Karimganj	40,000	84,200
	Total	32,15,000	34,63,009

Bridge over Brahmaputra

The river Brahmaputra.

124. No decision on the proposal of the Government of Assam for a roadway over the rail track on the proposed Railway bridge over the Brahmaputra at Pandu has yet been arrived at by the Railway Board. Owing to the outbreak of war, the question of bridging the Brahmaputra has since been shelved.

Road Maintenance by Mechanical Methods

Road maintenance by mechanical methods.

125. The mechanical units under the Department continued to give excellent results in the treatment of earth and gravelled roads. No addition was made to the existing fleet during the year.

Production and Distribution.

Gravelled Roads

126. The method of gravelling earth roads to make them fit for all weather traffic was continued wherever funds permitted. One hundred and twenty-three additional miles were gravelled during the year raising the total gravelled mileage from 1,077 in the previous year to 1,200. Gravelling of earth roads.

Meetings and Conferences

127. A meeting of the Assam Communications Board was held on the 22nd August 1938 for approving the Class I projects to be taken up during the year for selecting further schemes for prior consideration, and for other purposes. Meetings and Conferences.

Indian Roads Congress

128. The fifth Indian Roads Congress was held in Calcutta in February in 1939, and was attended by Mr. K. E. L. Pennell, M.C., I.S.E., Chief Engineer, and Secretary to the Government of Assam as delegate. Meetings of the Indian Road Congress.

18B.—Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works

129. The total expenditure was Rs.68,535 against Rs.46,054 in the year 1937. Rupees 2,265 was spent on original works and Rs.43,277 on maintenance. A sum of Rs.6,000 was paid as grants-in-aid. Rupees 15,894 was spent on establishment and pensionary charges and Rs.1,099 on tools and plant. Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Work.

Railways and Tramways

130. There was no change in the administration of Railways in Assam during the year under report. Railways.

No new construction was taken up. The total mileage during the year was 1,301·90 miles as before.

The Agreement with the Steamer Companies for the working of the Jorhat Railway expired in September 1937. It was renewed on fresh terms for a further period of five years by the Railway Board. This is now a Federal Railway.

131. The Singri-Panchnoi River Tramway in the district of Darrang which is managed by the Steamer Companies is the only Tramway (minor Railway) in this province. Tramways.

Railway Advisory Committees

132. During the year the Local Advisory Committee of the Dibru-Sadiya Railway and the Assam-Bengal Railway held three and two meetings respectively. Advisory Committee.

Posts and Telegraphs

133. Two extra departmental branch post offices Lengtisinga (Dhubri Head Office), and Kaithaikuchi (Gauhati Head Office), one Sub-Office Darrang-Panbari (Tezpur Head Office), and one combined Sub-Office Patrakhola (Sylhet Office) were opened. The Soklatunga E.D.B.O. (Head Office), Jorhat, was closed. The status of the Binnakandi and Adampur Combined Offices in the districts of Cachar and Sylhet was reduced to that of E. D. Branch Offices during the year under report. Posts and Telegraphs offices.

134. One thousand one hundred and thirty-nine licenses for wireless receiving sets were issued by Post Offices in Assam and five licences were issued for wireless receiver fixed stations during the year. Wireless Licenses.

135. The Jorhat Automatic Telephone Exchange was opened and the Jorhat-Tinsukia Trunk was thrown open to the public during the year. Telephones.

Tolls on Bridges and Roads

Tolls continued to be collected at the following places :— Tolls.

Sylhet

(1) At Keane bridge over the Surma river at Sylhet.

Khasi and Jaintia Hills

(2) At Umtyngar and Dawki on Shillong-Sylhet Road } For Vehicular traffic only.
(3) At Burnihat on the Gauhati-Shillong Road ... }

Production and Distribution.

Kamrup

(4) At Chalkhowa bridge at Barpeta.

Nowgong

(5) At Dharamtul bridge over the Kopili river in the 49th mile of the Assam Trunk Road (East).

Sibsagar

(6) At Dhansiri bridge at Numaligarh on the 156th mile of the Assam Trunk Road (East).

(7) At Dikhu bridge at Amgurighat on the 222nd mile of the Assam Trunk Road (East).

Lakhimpur

(8) At Dehing bridge at Khowanghat on the 257th mile of the Assam Trunk Road (East).

(9) At Ranganadi bridge (Pahumara) on the 4th mile west of North Lakhimpur on the North Trunk Road.

(10) At Desang bridge at Desang Barbaruaghat on the 229th mile of the Assam Trunk Road (East).

FLOODS

Goalpara District

Floods. 136. Between Lakhipur and Fakirganj on the Assam Trunk Road the total length of breaches between miles 103 to 118 was about 3 miles and there were 52 breaches in this Section.

Kamrup and Goalpara Districts

137. There were high flood during the year in the Western Assam Division and considerable damage was done to the roads specially in Dhubri and Barpeta Subdivisions.

Kamrup and Nowgong Districts

138. The Strand Road, Gauhati, was damaged due to the erosion of the river Brahmaputra.

Severe floods were experienced in the months of July, August and September 1938 in the Lower Assam Division. A concrete ring culvert near the Nakhola Inspection Bungalow was damaged and a fender of the Kukurmara bridge was bent. The Kathiatoli road was under water in places and a culvert collapsed.

Sylhet District

139. In the Cachar Division the Kachua river rose suddenly in September causing the bank to slip thereby damaging two pile piers of the Kachua bridge in consequence of which three of its spans had to be dismantled.

Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Sylhet Districts

140. In the Khasi and Jaintia Hills Division portion of Mawphlang-Tharia bridle and Tharia-Companyganj bridle roads were affected by flood and some miles of the Shillong-Sylhet Road damaged.

Darrang District

141. In the Tezpur Subdivision the Jaibhoreli river was in heavy spate. At Coldersghat ferry the rivers scoured the right bank and vehicular traffic was suspended for a week. Damages were also caused to the Belsiri bridge in 18th mile of North Trunk Road West.

Lakhimpur District

142. Due to unprecedented flood several breaches occurred on the Garamur Road and North Trunk Road between North Lakhimpur to Chaldhoa.

Great damage was done to the Khorai Bund.

Approaches of a bridge at the 73rd mile of the North Trunk Road were washed away causing breaches about 50 feet wide.

There were two high floods in the Dehing and the Brahmaputra rivers during the months of June and July in the Dibrugarh Subdivision. Damages done were not severe: only a few temporary bridges were washed away on the North Trunk Road.

Sibsagar District

143. During the month of July in the Golaghat Division the Brahmaptra flood overtopped certain portions of the Assam Trunk Road from Dergaon to Kaziranga and motor traffic was closed for a few days.

Sadiya Frontier Tract

144. Unprecedented flood thrice swept over the Sadiya Frontier Tract causing serious damage to roads. The wheeled traffic on the Saikhoa-Rongdoi road remained closed for two months.

Garo Hills District

145. This district suffered from unusually heavy flood during the year and parts of the Tura-Rowmari Road in the 32nd mile had to be diverted. Some damage was done to the Tura-Dalu Road.

Storms

146. A violent storm passed over Dibrugarh on 12th March causing damage to many buildings. Storms.

In a hail storm in June 1938 in Dhubri Subdivision two coolie sheds were blown down.

Three storms passed over the Goalpara District in April, May and August 1938 causing damage to several buildings, and the Inspection Bungalow at Lengrabhita was blown down.

Due to storm in the district of Sylhet a servant shed of the Executive Engineer's residence, Sylhet, and the stable attached to the Police building at Srimangal were blown down.

Land Slips

147. There was a heavy land slip on the Shillong-Sylhet Road in mile 19/7. Traffic was however only obstructed for a few hours. Land slips.

Owing to heavy land slips and subsidences transhipment had to be resorted to in various places on the Dimapur-Manipur Road between July and November 1938.

Earthquakes

148. There was no earthquake of severe intensity during the year, only slight shocks were occasionally experienced in Kamrup, Dhubri, Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills. Earthquakes.

Fire and Lightning

149. Two cold weather bridges in Barpeta Subdivision and one cold weather bridge in Dhubri Subdivision the Subordinates' staging hut with its cookshed at Themokedima in the Naga Hills and the latrine of the Inspection Bungalow at Kalaigaon were burnt during the year by accidental fire. Fire and lightning.

The latrine of the Subordinates' Staging hut at Halem was burnt by a jungle fire in April 1938.

SECTION 13.—Industries

[*See* the Report of the Department of Industries, Assam, for the year 1938-39]

150. As in previous years, the activities of the Department were confined, mainly to the encouragement of handloom weaving and sericulture and to the spread of technical and industrial education in the province. The Peripatetic Weaving Parties continued their propaganda and demonstration work for the introduction of improved weaving appliances, processes and new designs. A jute weaving demonstration party also introduced jute weaving throughout the province. General.

The work of Sericultural branch was confined to the production of improved seeds in the two sericultural stations at Shillong and Titabar and demonstrations in different places. The schemes sanctioned and financed by the Government of India for the development of sericulture continued to be of great help to the silk rearers of the province. The services of the Soap Instructor have been of great value to the Province as is evident from the increasing demand for training in this branch of the Industry.

151. The four Peripatetic Weaving Parties visited in all 1,000 villages and rendered help to 49 schools, 40 weaving, dyeing and printing factories, 137 Co-operative Societies, and introduced 474 fly-shuttle looms and sleys, 3 jacquards, 23 handcreels, 33 warping drums, and one dobby besides a large number of accessories. They also participated in 13 exhibitions and delivered lantern lectures in all rural uplift gatherings. Unorganised cottage industries, handloom weaving and sericulture.

Production and Distribution.

The grant from the Government of India has been of great help for the development of hand-loom industry in the province.

The Government Weaving Institute, Gauhati, had 48 students on the roll at the beginning of the year of whom 10 were females. The total number of students on the roll at the close of the year stood at 54 as against 50 in the preceding year. Besides the looms and accessories already in the workshop attached to the institute, a power-driven Fancy Twisting Machine was installed in it during the year.

The Sericultural stations at Titabar and Shillong as usual endeavoured to produce improved seeds. The production of cellular seeds was always the look-out of the Sericultural Department. Disease-free layings and seed cocoons were supplied to different places in and outside the province for nursery.

The total sales of the Government Emporium at Gauhati and the Branch Emporium at Sylhet amounted to Rs.26,165 as against Rs.26,075 in the preceding year. The Government Emporium at Gauhati also received a contribution of Rs.1,000 from the Government of India during the year. It also supplied 30 Co-operative Societies with looms and accessories on the hire-purchase system.

Financial assistance.

152. A loan of Rs.700 was issued during the year for small industrial purposes. A total sum of Rs.1,750 was contributed by Government to 19 private institutions imparting vocational training to students.

Technical and industrial education.

153. The three Government technical schools at Kohima, Jorhat and Sylhet had 26, 93 and 106 pupils respectively on the roll for vocational training at the end of the year. There were altogether 16 stipendiaries undergoing training in technical subjects during the year in different institutions outside the province. Besides these there were two more stipendiaries under training in the Dibru-Sadiya Railway Workshop.

From the income of the Assam Williamson Education Endowment Fund 14 apprentices were trained by means of Scholarships. A total sum of Rs.2,800 was contributed to 22 private technical institutions. Some assistance was also given for circulating libraries among vernacular teachers and pupils, etc.

SECTION 14.—Tea Industry

[*See* Report on Tea Culture in Assam for the year ending the 31st December 1938]

Tea.

154. The number of gardens was 1,120 against 1,119 of the previous year The total area of land comprised within the tea estates was 1,688,733 acres. The area under actual cultivation decreased from 439,990 acres (revised) to 428,989 acres and the area plucked increased from 401,626 acres to 402,819 acres. The total outturn of tea in the province during the year was 260,248,898 lbs. of black and 808,493 lbs. of green tea against 241,467,611 lbs. and 67,372 lbs. respectively in the previous year.

Labour force.

155. The daily average number of permanent garden labour was 457,703, of permanent outside labour 31,722 and of temporary outside labour 31,507 against 453,876, 29,834 and 27,096 persons respectively in the previous year.

Weather.

156. The distribution of rainfall and the weather condition during the year were favourable in the Assam Valley while in the Surma Valley local flood due to unusual heavy rainfall during the later part of the season caused some damage to certain gardens.

Prices.

157. The prices were on average lower than those in the last year due to increased stock. Assam Valley tea fetched 1*s*. 2·52*d*. and Surma Valley 11·76 *d*. in London sales, 8 annas 4 pies and 6 annas 2 pies in Calcutta sales, as compared with 1 *s*. 3·46*d*., 1*s*. 1·52*d*., 9 annas 5 pies and 7 annas 9 pies for the year 1937 respectively.

Condition of tea industry.

158. Although the restriction scheme is still in force the general condition of the Industry appreciably improved during the year.

Revenue and Finance.

CHAPTER V

SECTION 1.—Revenue and Finance

Land revenue

159. The land revenue demand excluding the temporary reduction but including the arrears was Rs.1,33,81,247 against Rs.1,35,11,584 in the previous year. Of this Rs.92,24,103 were collected, *i.e.*, a percentage of 68·94 compared with the percentage of 73·40 in the previous year. Rupees 4,35,765 were remitted and Rs.37,37,187 were outstanding at the close of the year.

SECTION 2.—Public Revenue and Finance

160. The following statement shows the actual provincial receipts of 1938-39 as compared with the figures for 1937-38 :—

Heads of Revenue	Actuals, 1937-38	Actuals, 1938-39	Increase	Decrease
1	2	3	4	5
	Trs.	Trs.	Trs.	Trs.
I.—Customs	11,75	11,69	...	6
IV.—Taxes on Income other than Corporation tax.	2,50	3,00	50	...
V.—Salt	7	2	...	5
VII.—Land Revenue	1,21,33	1,12,64	...	8,69
VIII.—Provincial Excise	35,93	35,33	...	60
IX.—Stamps	18,38	18,12	...	26
X.—Forest	17,51	16,69	...	82
XI.—Registration	1,67	1,77	10	...
XII.—Receipts under Motor Vehicles Taxation Act.	2,78	3,71	93	...
XIII.—Other taxes and duties ...	...	6	6	...
XX.—Interest	42	12	...	30
XXI.—Administration of Justice ...	1,60	1,62	2	...
XXII.—Jails and Convict Settlements	62	38	...	24
XXIII.—Police	28	24	...	4
XXIV.—Ports and Pilotage	...	...	...	...
XXVI.—Education	3,76	3,88	12	...
XXVII.—Medical	1,95	1,99	4	...
XXVIII.—Public Health	2,29	2,54	25	...
XXIX.—Agriculture	1,39	1,10	...	29
XXX.—Veterinary	44	41	...	3
XXXI.—Co-operation	17	29	12	...
XXXII.—Industries	40	44	4	...
XXXVI.—Miscellaneous Departments...	55	46	...	9
XXXIX.—Civil Works	16,11	10,33	...	5,78
XLIX.—Receipts in aid of superannuation.	21	24	3	...
XLV.—Stationery and Printing ...	50	49	...	1
XLVI.—Miscellaneous	99	89	...	10
XLVI.—Grants in aid from Central Government.	30,00	30,00	...	...
L.—Miscellaneous adjustments between Central and Provincial Governments.	...	3	3	...
Public Debt incurred	...	1,13,00	1,13,00	...
O.—Unfunded Debt	15,19	15,44	25	...
Deposit and Advances ...	2,23,61	2,56,09	32,48	...
Suspense	47,02	...	...	47,02
Loans and Advances by the Provincial Government.	8,98	3,39	...	5,59
Remittances within India ...	2,31,49	1,65,62	...	65,87
Total	7,99,90	8,12,03	1,47,97	1,35,84
Opening balance	24,64	30,98	...	...
Grand total	8,24,53	8,43,01	...	...

Revenue and Finance.

161. The main reasons for the principal increases and decreases are as follows :—

IV.—Taxes on Income other than Corporation Tax (+ Trs. 50).—Due to an increase in the Provincial share of Income-tax.

VII.—Land Revenue (—Trs.8,69).—Due chiefly to a further increase in the percentage of remission of land revenue and partly to suspension and remission of revenue owing to floods.

VIII.—Provincial Excise (—Trs. 60).—The main decrease is under 'Opium' and this is due to a policy adopted by Government which aims at the gradual extermination of the opium habit.

IX.—Stamps (—Trs. 26).—The severe floods of 1938 were responsible for the decrease of revenue under this head.

X.—Forests (—Trs. 82).—The decrease is due partly to adjustments of payments to contractors for sleepers supplied in the previous year and partly to the concession given in the riverain villages in the flood affected areas for free dugouts from reserved trees and by allowing them to sell firewood free of royalty.

XII.—Receipts under Motor Vehicles Taxation Act (+Trs. 93).—Due to the increase in the number of motor vehicles.

XX.—Interest (—Trs.30).—The decrease is due partly to a reduction in the rates of interest on various kinds of advances and loans granted by the Provincial Government and partly to the floods of 1939.

XXII.—Jails and Convict Settlement (—Trs. 24).—Owing to lesser demand for articles manufactured in jails.

XXVIII.—Public Health (+Trs.25).—Owing to increased receipts from the grant made by the Government of India for the economic development of rural areas under water-supply and village sanitation.

XXIX.—Agriculture (—Trs. 29).—Due mainly to lesser receipts from the Government of India's grants for the livestock improvement scheme and for the fruit culture scheme.

XXXIX.—Civil Works (—Trs. 5,78).—Owing to smaller grants from the Petrol Tax Fund.

Capital and Debt heads (+Trs. 27,25).—Receipts and expenditure under these heads are of a fluctuating nature and accurate estimates are not possible.

162. The statement below shows the actual provincial expenditure of 1938-39 as compared with the figures of 1937-38 :—

Heads of expenditure	Actuals, 1937-38	Actuals, 1938-39	Increase	Decrease
1	2	3	4	5
	Trs.	Trs.	Trs.	Trs.
7.—Land Revenue	16,59	16,44	...	15
8.—Provincial Excise	4,69	4,32	...	37
9.—Stamps	43	39	...	4
10.—Forests	11,72	11,61	...	11
11.—Registration	1,38	1,43	5	...
12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act.	1,54	1,73	19	...
18.—Other Revenue expenditure financed from ordinary revenue.	46	69	23	...
22.—Interest on debt and other obligations.	3,11	3,25	14	...
23.—Appropriation for reduction or avoidance of debt.	...	30,65	30,65	...
25.—General Administration	34,31	34,38	7	...
27.—Administration of Justice ...	9,75	10,14	39	...
28.—Jails and Convict Settlements ...	4,78	4,47	...	31
29.—Police	31,10	30,78	...	32
30.—Ports and Pilotage	11	9	...	2

Heads of expenditure	Actuals, 1937-38	Actuals, 1938-39	Increase	Decrease
1	2	3	4	5
	Trs.	Trs.	Trs.	Trs.
36.—Scientific Departments	14	4	...	10
37.—Education (European) / Ditto (Other than European)	35,60	36,05	45	...
38.—Medical	14,48	14,54	6	...
39.—Public Health	7,89	8,86	97	...
40.—Agriculture	6,31	5,78	...	53
41.—Veterinary	1,53	1,58	5	...
42.—Co-operation	1,00	96	...	4
43.—Industries	2,63	2,73	10	...
47.—Miscellaneous Departments ...	98	87	...	11
50.—Civil Works	52,90	43,83	...	9,07
54A.—Famine Relief...	44	3,02	2,58	...
55.—Superannuation Allowances and Pensions.	20,81	22,00	1,19	...
56.—Stationery and Printing	3,40	3,34	...	6
57.—Miscellaneous	10,35	5,52	...	4,83
83.—Payment of commuted value of Pensions.	1,46	1,92	48	...
85.—Payments to Retrenched Personnel	—9	—8	1	...
Public Debt	...	1,03,65	1,03,65	...
Unfunded Debt	...	10,16	10,16	...
Deposits and Advances	2,36,53	2,30,70	...	5,83
Suspense	47,01	...	...	47,01
Loans and Advances by the Provincial Government.	2,20	6,07	3,87	...
Remittances within India	2,28,03	1,63,84	...	64,19
Total	7,93,57	8,15,77	1,55,29	1,33,09
Closing balance	30,98	27,24	...	...
Grand total	8,24,55	8,43,01	...	...

163. The main reasons for the principal increases or decreases are given below:—

8.—Provincial Excise (*—Trs. 37*).—Less expenditure on opium supplied to the Excise Department as a result of 10 per cent. reduction in rations.

23.—Appropriation for reduction or avoidance of Debt (*+Trs. 30,65*).—This represents the repayment of the Government of India's loan to meet the deficit in the accounts for 1936-37.

27.—Administration of Justice (*+Trs. 39*).—Mainly as a result of the re-allocation of the leave salary in respect of leave taken on or after 1st April 1937 by Judicial Officers of Bengal serving under the Government of Assam.

28.—Jails and Convict Settlements (*—Trs. 31*).—Due mainly to the fall in the cost of rations owing to a drop in the jail population and partly to the observance of economy.

29.—Police (*—Trs. 32*).—Mainly due to the abolition of the temporary staff of the Criminal Investigation Department.

37.—Education (*+Trs. 45*).—Due to periodical increments, larger leave salaries drawn by officers on leave in England and other small causes.

Revenue and Finance.

39.—*Public Health* (+*Trs.* 97).—Increase due to the appointment of a new permanent Director of Public Health and to increased expenditure from the Government of India's grant for economic development of rural areas. The prevalence of epidemics and greater charges for leave salaries drawn by officers in England were also partly responsible for the increase.

40.—*Agriculture* (—*Trs.* 53).—The decrease is due mainly to the omission of the sum of Trs. 29 paid in 1937-38 as a result of a decree by the Calcutta High Court allowing a higher price than that paid for the land acquired for the Sylhet Cattle Farm and partly to a smaller grant from the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research for the economic development of rural areas for the livestock improvement scheme as well as to other small causes.

50.—*Civil Works* (—*Trs.* 9,07).—Owing to smaller grants from the Petrol Tax Fund and to less expenditure under original works.

54A.—*Famine Relief* (+*Trs.* 2,58).—Due to grants needed to help the people affected by the floods of 1938.

55.—*Superannuation Allowances and Pensions* (+*Trs.* 1,19).—Due to increase in pensionary charges.

57.—*Miscellaneous* (—*Trs.* 4,83).—Owing to less expenditure under irrecoverable agricultural loans written-off.

83.—*Payment of commuted value of pensions* (+*Trs.* 48).—Due to extra expenditure owing to an increase in the demand for commutation of pensions.

Capital and Debt heads (+*Trs.* 65).—As explained under revenue, expenditure under these heads are of a fluctuating nature.

Stamps.

164. The provincial revenue derived in Assam under the Stamp and Court Fees Acts was Rs. 17,87,288 against Rs. 18,09,946 in the preceding year. The number of licensed vendors of stamps employed during the year was 376 against 370 in the preceding year. The discount allowed to vendors on the sale of stamps increased from Rs.23,783 to Rs.23,904. The Courts and Revenue Officers dealt with 1,166 cases of insufficiently stamped or unstamped instruments and realised duty and penalty amounting to Rs.5,964. There was one prosecution. It was instituted in 1937-38 but was disposed of in 1938-39 and ended in acquittal.

SECTION 3.—Excise

[*See* the Report on the Administration of the Excise Department in Assam for the year 1938-39.]

Excise receipts and expenditure.

165. The total receipts for the year were Rs.35,77,092 against Rs.36,38,885 in 1937-38. Receipts from liquors, hemp drugs and other miscellaneous sources increased by Rs.1,15,313 while receipts from opium decreased by Rs.1,77,106 resulting in a net decrease of Rs.61,793 or 1·7 per cent. over the revenue of the previous year. The net expenditure, excluding cost of opium, fell from Rs.3,26,432 to Rs.3,21,927.

Country spirit.

166. The consumption of country spirit rose from 258,661 L. P. gallons to 276,832 L. P. gallons. The check put on illicit distillation, excessive brewing of *pachwai* and the fraud practised on the consumers by the vendors, and opening of lessee manager shops in the localities where illicit distillation was suspected were the main causes for increase in consumption.

The 'shop bottling' system continued in seven country spirit shops in Sylhet, Goalpara, Kamrup, Lakhimpur and Nowgong, but it has not proved efficient as a safeguard against malpractices usually taken recourse to by the dishonest vendors. Revenue and Finance.

The central bottling system continued to prove satisfactory and popular.

The number of warehouses remained the same, *viz.*, 10, as in 1937-38.

167. The consumption of *ganja* amounted to 303 mds. 10 srs. as against 288 mds. 19 srs. in the previous year. The increase represents the replacement of illicit by licit *ganja*. Large quantities of hill *ganja* are smuggled into the province every year inspite of all the efforts of the excise staff. The habit of using wild *bhang*—which grows all over the Assam Valley—as a substitute for excise *ganja* is also a serious menace and the campaign for the destruction of this plant was pursued as usual during the year under report. *Ganja.*

168. The consumption of opium during the year fell from 207 mds. 15 srs. to 183 mds. 6 srs. with a corresponding fall in revenue from Rs.11,84,182 to Rs. 10,07,076. The 10th annual 10 per cent. reduction in the rations of consumers below 50 years of age which was given effect to from the 1st April 1938 in the plains districts, cancellation of passes due to deaths, desertion and stoppage of issuing any more new passes in non-excluded areas were the causes for the decrease in consumption. There were 33,057 registered consumers at the beginning and 30,366 at the close of the year, of whom 29,791 held permanent and 575 temporary passes with a total monthly rations of 14 mds. 38 srs. 37 tolas 4 annas. With a view to hasten the total eradication of opium evil from the Province, Government, after the close of the year, introduced total prohibition in Sibsagar and Dibrugarh subdivisions south of the Brahmaputra river and have also enforced accelerated reduction of opium rations in the remaining non-excluded areas of the Province in order to effect complete prohibition of opium in two years. Another measure adopted by Government was the policy regarding settlement of excise and opium shops and with a view to eliminate foreigners not domiciled in the Province and to give preferential treatment to the bidders of the scheduled classes and tribal people where they predominate, the lessees of 3 years' standing in any particular kind of shop were debarred from settlement. The reduction policy of Government and the stoppage of issuing new passes to consumers unless on medical grounds has no doubt arrested the spread of opium but it has given a great impetus to the smuggling of contraband opium and 3 mds. 15 srs. 7½ tolas of contraband opium were seized during the year as against 2 mds. 3 srs. 51 tolas 5 annas in the previous year. The number of retail licenses fell from 287 to 282. The treasury and retail prices of opium remained unchanged. Opium.

169. Local Bodies were consulted as usual in matter of general and local importance in connection with the excise administration and in regard to sites of all old and new excise and opium shops. Where there were real grounds for objection and concrete and practical suggestions were made, the wishes of the Boards were carefully considered and respected. General.

The number of persons arrested for offences against Excise and Opium laws was 1,702 as against 2,319 in the previous year. Excise Officers obtained convictions in 91·6 per cent. of the cases sent up by them while other officers secured convictions in 84·7 per cent. of their detections. Although there was a decrease in the number of persons arrested, still it is believed that the number of smugglers and petty dealers has enormously increased. Ingenious methods of transport and sales are being constantly devised and adopted by the illicit traffickers to avoid detection.

Revenue and Finance.

SECTION 4.—Local Funds

[For the year ending 31st March 1939]

170. The following statements show the receipts and charges of Local Funds during the year :—

STATEMENT A SHOWING THE INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND BALANCES OF LOCAL BOARDS IN ASSAM DURING THE YEAR 1938-39—(PROVINCIAL).

Serial No.	Names of Local Boards	Opening balance	Receipts	Total	Payments	Closing balance
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1	Silchar ..	24,880 3 10	1,81,740 12 6	206,621 0 4	1,97,352 8 8	9,268 7 8
2	Hailakandi ..	20,012 4 4	81,906 7 10	1,01,918 12 2	83,341 5 2	18,577 7 0
3	Tezpur ..	51,553 13 9	2,29,165 6 9	2,80,719 4 6	2,27,012 5 6	53,706 15 0
4	Mangaldai ..	25,417 7 3	1,51,182 5 0	1,76,599 12 3	1,60,060 5 0	16,539 7 3
5	Dhubri ..	26,911 12 2	3,40,566 13 9	3,67,478 9 11	3,40,440 15 5	27,037 10 6
6	Goalpara ..	26,296 0 11	1,43,172 2 3	1,69,468 3 2	1,48,732 4 3	20,735 14 11
7	Gauhati ..	77,313 14 10	3,11,524 8 0	3,88,338 6 10	3,33,056 10 6	55,781 12 4
8	Barpeta ..	31,391 2 1	1,45,085 15 11	1,76,477 2 0	1,66,463 3 10	10,013 14 2
9	Dibrugarh ..	66,973 7 5	2,69,772 14 6	3,36,746 5 11	2,73,425 12 3	63,320 9 8
10	North Lakhimpur	18,957 9 10	99,210 13 11	1,18,168 7 9	1,04,286 2 6	13,882 5 3
11	Nowgong ..	49,263 7 1	2,61,711 14 0	3,10,975 5 1	2,81,400 7 9	29,574 13 4
12	Jorhat ..	10,511 13 4	1,72,113 7 3	1,82,625 4 7	1,75,412 10 9	7,212 9 10
13	Sibsagar ..	17,797 14 7	1,79,723 14 10	1,97,521 13 5	1,74,188 7 3	23,333 6 2
14	Golaghat ..	18,679 13 2	1,28,869 14 3	1,47,549 11 5	1,27,284 9 3	20,265 2 2
15	North Sylhet ..	13,937 7 7	1,91,403 4 10	2,05,340 12 5	1,90,479 8 9	14,861 3 8
16	Karimganj ..	9,047 3 7	1,76,950 1 10	1,85,997 5 5	1,76,651 4 7	9,346 0 10
17	Habiganj ..	9,670 6 6	1,84,983 10 5	1,94,654 0 11	1,89,669 15 9	4,984 1 2
18	Sunamganj ..	5,136 15 11	1,68,918 12 8	1,74,055 12 7	1,69,683 6 7	4,372 6 0
19	South Sylhet ..	46,384 15 10	1,71,339 13 11	2,17,724 13 9	1,80,167 15 8	37,556 14 1
	Total ..	5,50,137 14 0	35,89,343 2 5	41,39,481 0 5	36,99,109 15 5	4,40,371 1 0

STATEMENT B SHOWING THE INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND BALANCES OF THE MUNICIPAL BOARDS, TOWN COMMITTEES AND DISTRICT FUNDS IN ASSAM FOR THE YEAR 1938-39—(PROVINCIAL).

Serial No.	Names of Municipal Boards and Town Committees	Opening balance	Receipts	Total	Payments	Closing balance
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1	Silchar Municipality ..	40,826 0 10	1,03,382 4 6	1,44,208 5 4	1,19,075 3 9	25,133 1 7
2	Hailakandi Town Committee ..	2,436 3 10	16,842 10 0	19,278 13 10	15,646 1 6	3,632 12 4
3	Tezpur Municipality ..	24,270 3 7	79,414 2 0	1,03,684 5 7	77,209 3 9	26,475 1 10
4	Mangaldai Town Committee ..	8,832 12 8	10,950 10 6	19,783 7 2	11,751 3 6	8,032 3 8
5	Dhubri Municipality ..	6,697 13 4	51,778 3 0	58,476 0 4	54,572 0 3	3,904 0 1
6	Goalpara Municipality ..	7,525 1 6	25,540 15 3	33,066 0 9	27,973 3 9	5,092 13 0
7	Gauripur Town Committee ..	3,019 10 1	12,997 9 0	16,017 3 1	13,443 0 9	2,574 2 4
8	Gauhati Municipality ..	12,509 0 8	1,56,891 12 3	1,69,400 12 11	1,51,786 12 5	17,614 0 6
9	Barpeta Municipality ..	4,735 9 2	32,857 7 0	37,593 0 2	32,186 11 3	5,406 4 11
9A	Nalbari Town Committee ..	..	1,417 2 0	1,417 2 0	..	1,417 2 0
10	North Lakhimpur Town Committee	2,937 3 5	13,343 13 0	16,281 0 5	12,581 15 3	3,699 1 2
11	Tinsukia Town Committee ..	3,057 12 2	3,283 15 6	6,341 11 8	2,335 12 1	4,005 15 7
12	Nowgong Municipality ..	5,198 14 11	45,422 0 9	50,620 15 8	45,878 15 6	4,742 0 2
13	Jorhat Municipality ..	7,672 1 0	63,842 3 3	71,514 4 3	60,205 12 6	11,308 7 9
14	Sibsagar Municipality ..	1,532 7 2	31,862 7 6	33,394 14 8	30,978 2 8	2,416 12 0
15	Golaghat Municipality ..	3,457 2 5	28,836 8 6	32,293 10 11	28,809 1 3	3,484 9 8
16	North Sylhet Municipality ..	9,086 13 6	1,14,307 11 6	1,23,394 9 0	1,15,184 3 3	8,210 5 9
17	Karimganj Municipality ..	1,264 8 0	33,261 6 8	34,525 14 8	32,642 0 9	1,883 13 11
18	Habiganj Municipality ..	3,192 4 10	34,755 10 3	37,947 15 1	36,215 14 9	1,732 0 4
19	Sunamganj Municipality ..	2,010 1 9	18,632 14 9	20,643 0 6	19,187 15 0	1,455 1 6
20	Maulvibazar Municipality ..	2,728 14 9	21,097 11 4	23,826 10 1	22,613 11 7	1,212 14 6
21	Srimangal Town Committee ..	1,387 13 6	6,574 3 6	7,962 1 0	6,491 1 0	1,471 0 0
	Total ..	1,54,378 9 1	9,07,293 6 0	10,61,671 15 1	9,16,768 2 6	1,44,903 12 7
	Garo Hills District Fund ..	47,487 13 2	73,459 10 8	1,20,947 7 10	76,417 15 3	44,529 8 7

STATEMENT C SHOWING THE INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND BALANCES OF THE TOWN AND BAZAR FUNDS IN ASSAM FOR THE YEAR 1938-39.

Serial No.	Name of the funds	Opening balance	Receipts	Total	Payments	Closing balance
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		(PROVINCIAL)				
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1	Haflong Bazar Fund ..	3,753 13 1	16,648 12 6	20,402 9 7	17,331 8 6	3,071 1 1
2	Tura Fund ..	9,899 2 0	15,384 3 3	25,283 5 3	17,820 9 9	7,462 11 6
3	Sadiya Local Fund	5,170 10 2	35,338 10 3	40,509 4 5	23,808 2 9	16,701 1 8
	Total ..	18,823 9 3	67,371 10 0	86,195 3 3	58,960 5 0	27,234 14 3
		TOWN AND BAZAR FUNDS—(CENTRAL)				
1	Imphal Town Fund	13,764 10 1	21,531 15 3	35,296 9 4	16,437 8 9	18,859 0 7
		TEA RATES ROAD FUND—(PROVINCIAL)				
1	Cachar ..	24,619 3 6	13,171 0 0	37,790 3 6	....	37,790 3 6
2	Darrang ..	78,432 8 0	23,226 13 0	1,01,659 5 0	30,983 0 0	70,676 5 0
3	Goalpara ..	2,323 2 5	208 8 0	2,531 10 5	....	2,531 10 5
4	Kamrup ..	16,262 3 0	795 6 0	17,057 9 0	....	17,057 9 0
5	Shillong ..	—2,25,846 8 3	58 6 11	—2,25,788 1 4	37,762 5 0	—2,63,550 6 4
6	Lakhimpur ..	94,752 11 6	30,962 6 0	1,25,715 1 6	57,472 6 0	68,242 11 6
7	Nowgong ..	46,602 14 0	4,317 4 0	50,920 2 0	....	50,920 2 0
8	Sibsagar ..	—1,38,008 6 0	16,112 12 0	—1,21,895 10 0	....	—1,21,895 10 0
9	Sylhet ..	1,86,430 3 0	36,188 13 0	2,22,619 0 0	43,952 0 3	1,78,666 15 9
	Total ..	85,567 15 2	1,25,041 4 11	2,10,609 4 1	1,70,169 11 3	40,439 8 10
		BARPATHAR DEVELOPMENT FUND—(PROVINCIAL)				
1	Barpathar ..	4,042 10 4	15,360 3 0	19,402 13 4	14,327 6 0	5,075 7 4

STATEMENT D SHOWING THE INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND BALANCES OF THE DISTRICT CHOWKIDARI REWARD FUNDS, ASSAM WILLIAMSON EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND, ASSAM VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT FUND AND THE B. BARUA ENDOWMENT FUND FOR THE YEAR 1938-39—(PROVINCIAL).

Serial No.	Names of the fund	Opening balance	Receipts	Total	Payments	Closing balance
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		DISTRICT CHOWKIDARI REWARD FUND				
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1	Cachar ..	1,146 11 3	198 1 6	1,344 12 9	283 0 0	1,061 12 9
2	Goalpara ..	1,453 10 1	537 5 6	1,990 15 7	515 2 0	1,475 13 7
3	Sylhet ..	3,079 15 9	2,414 10 6	5,494 10 3	1,697 4 0	3,797 0 7
	Total ..	5,680 5 1	3,150 1 6	8,830 6 7	2,495 6 0	6,334 10 11
		ASSAM WILLIAMSON EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND				
	Provincial ..	8,584 4 2	5,806 8 0	14,390 12 2	5,659 6 0	8,731 6 2
		ASSAM VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT FUND				
	Provincial ..	5,580 0 0	....	5,580 0 0	....	5,580 0 0
		B. BARUA ENDOWMENT FUND				
	Sibsagar ..	1,643 12 9	6,025 12 0	7,669 8 9	5,791 7 9	1,878 1 0

SECTION 5.—Local Rates

[*See* Report on the Land Revenue Administration of Assam for the year ending the 30th June 1939.]

171. The demand including arrears was Rs.16,75,905 against Rs.16,71,298 in the preceding year. Collection amounted to Rs.12,90,516 and Rs.34,776 were remitted.

Additional local rates derived from land under tea cultivation amounted to Rs.1,41,234 during the year against Rs.1,38,770 in the previous year. Of this sum, Rs.91,749 came from the Assam Valley and Rs.49,485 from the Surma Valley.

Vital Statistics.

CHAPTER VI

SECTION 1.—Vital Statistics

[*See* the Annual Public Health Report of Assam for 1938.]

General.

172. The provincial vital statistics are based on the Census population (7,927,953) of 1931 in the plains districts. The birth-rate per mille for 1938 was 29·92 against 31·31 in 1937 and a quinquennial average of 30·69 as against 30·44 in the preceding quinquennium. The death-rate was 22·42 against 22·21 in 1937 and a quinquennial average of 20·64 as against 19·19. The birth and death rates of Assam were lower than those of any other province except Sind. But it should be noted that the compilation of vital statistics in Assam is not satisfactory owing to the defective nature of the reporting agencies. Owing to lack of funds no real improvement in this direction has so far been possible.

Registration in the Hill Districts.

173. Births and deaths registered in certain Hill Districts areas are compared below with those of the previous year :—

Districts	Population under registration	1938		1937	
		Birth-rate	Death-rate	Birth-rate	Death-rate
1	2	3	4	5	6
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	64,128	26·91	18·20	29·88	19·60
Naga Hills	3,974	63·33	49·16	58·68	41·19
Lushai Hills	124,404	46·10	24·91	45·36	25·39
Garo Hills	190,911	29·16	21·40	29·46	20·85
Sadiya Frontier Tract ...	21,118	30·64	23·58	29·50	22·26

SECTION 2.—Charitable Dispensaries

[*See* the Annual Report on the working of the Civil Hospitals and Dispensaries in Assam for 1938.]

Hospitals and Dispensaries.

174. The number of hospitals and dispensaries increased during the year to 286, *i.e.*, an increase of five as compared with the total for the previous year. The increase is due to the opening of three new State dispensaries (*viz.*, Kohima-Dimapur Road and Mokokchung travelling dispensaries in the Naga Hills, and Garo Hills travelling dispensary) and two new Local Fund dispensaries (*viz.*, at Goreswar in Kamrup and Barbarua in the Lakhimpur district). The total number of patients treated at State-Public, Local Fund and Private-Aided hospitals and dispensaries decreased from 2,111,779 in 1937 to 1,994,687 in 1938; of this number 1,971,936 were out-patients. The districts of Sylhet, Cachar, Sibsagar and Nowgong were responsible for the decrease in attendance which is ascribed to the relative healthiness of the localities and to the less prevalence of malaria during the year.

The number of in-patients fell from 22,839 in 1937 to 22,751 in 1938. The ratio of deaths per cent. of the total treated was 5·90 in 1938 against 5·42 in the preceding year.

Altogether 2,226,654 patients were treated in all classes of hospitals and dispensaries in 1938 against 2,367,396 in 1937.

The total income (including opening balances) of State-Public, Local Fund and Private-Aided Institutions was Rs.10,95,586 against Rs.12,17,396 in 1937. Of this the Government contribution amounted to Rs.4,71,894 against Rs.5,26,877 in the previous year. The total expenditure decreased from Rs.10,45,202 in 1937 to Rs.9,40,492 in 1938.

Leper Asylum.

175. The five Leper Institutions mentioned in the previous year's report, *viz.*, at Sylhet, Gauhati, Kohima, Dhubri and Tura continued to admit lepers as in-patients and a sixth was put into operation at Barpeta during the year under report. In these institutions there were 206 patients remaining from the previous year ; 129 were admitted, 28 were discharged " cured or relieved ", 60 discharged " otherwise," 9 died, leaving 238 at the end of the year. The Mission Leper Colony at Jorhat also functioned satisfactorily with 92 patients against 114 of the previous year. The number of clinics under the administration of the Medical and Public Health Departments rose from 161 in 1937 to 170 in 1938 ; 56 out-door clinics remained open in dispensaries under the Public Health Department and six more clinics were newly opened during the year.

The total number of lepers treated in institutions under the Medical and Public Health Departments decreased from 4,692 in 1937 to 4,375 in 1938.

A scheme of subsidised dispensaries was undertaken during the year with a total of 27 dispensaries sanctioned by Government for the purpose but for want of suitable qualified doctors no more than 8 dispensaries could be opened during the year. The total number of patients treated was 4,453 and the total average daily number was 81·26.

There were 1,851 cases of Tuberculosis of lungs with 114 deaths against 1,724 cases with 102 deaths in the previous year. As in the previous year special lectures, demonstrations and propaganda work with the aid of magic lanterns were undertaken both by the Medical and Public Health Departments, the expenditure on which was met partly from the King George Thanksgiving (Anti-Tuberculosis) Fund and partly from the Public Health Department budget. The anti-tuberculosis clinic at Shillong continued its work satisfactorily and a new clinic was opened at Nowgong during the year. During the year under report Dr. B. K. Sikand, M.B., B.S., D.P.H., Organising Secretary, King George Thanksgiving (Anti-Tuberculosis) Fund, New Delhi, came to this province and made an instructive tour delivering valuable addresses at several places and consulting medical officers and others interested in the problem in the province. The question of a sanatorium still awaits a period of financial prosperity.

Altogether 6,62,694 cases of Malaria were treated with 111 deaths against 7,16,192 cases with 133 deaths in the preceding year.

SECTION 3.—Mental Hospital

[*See* the Annual Report on the working of the Mental Hospital, Tezpur, for 1938.]

Mental Hospital.

176. The total number of in-patients remaining in the Mental Hospital, Tezpur, at the end of the year was 689 against 696 in 1937. During the year under review 106 patients were admitted including 11 re-admissions. There were 53 discharged "Cured", 3 discharged "Improved", 4 discharged "Not improved", and 53 died. The percentage of recovery calculated on the daily average strength (*viz.*, 688·46) was 7·70 against 10·43 in 1937.

The total number of admissions to the infirmaries was 365 against 514 in 1937 with a daily average sick rate of 61·94 against 62·24 in 1937.

The total expenditure for the upkeep of the Tezpur Mental Hospital rose to Rs. 1,28,644-14-6 from Rs. 1,24,686-2-6 in 1937. The increase in expenditure was due to larger expenditure under heads " Establishment—Superintendence ", " Diet " and "Public Works Departmental Charges ". The average cost per head was Rs.185-12-9 against Rs. 176-10-8 in 1937.

SECTION 4.—Sanitation

[*See* the Annual Public Health Report of Assam for 1938.]

177. During the year—though there were fewer cases of small-pox, fever, dysentery, and diarrhoea—cholera broke out in epidemic form in almost all the districts and took a heavy toll leaving the state of public health in the province unsatisfactory on the whole as in the previous year. The number of deaths from cholera rose from 5,440 (previous year) to 11,907. The death rate per mille was 1·50 against 0·69 in 1937 and 0·70 the decennial average. The highest number of deaths recorded was in November and December (2,552 and 2,719 respectively). The lowest mortality (163) was recorded in February. The highest death-rate (2·78) was reported from the district of Sylhet followed by Goalpara (2·26) and Kamrup (1·92) and the lowest (0·02) from Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.

During the year malaria did not occur in epidemic form. The number of treatment parcels of Quinine re-inforced Cinchona-febrifuge sold fell from 9,752 to 7,931 as compared with the previous year. The Assam Medical Research Society continued to do useful research work on malaria and Government grant of Rs.20,000 to the Society was continued. Systematic survey and treatment of *kala-azar* were continued. The number of reported deaths and cases treated respectively were 1,338 and 17,268 against 1,057 and 12,051 in 1937. The method of diagnosis and treatment of the disease remained the same as in the previous year but Neo-stibosan was again brought in use in urban areas. The death-rate per mille under the head "fever", which included deaths from other diseases having fever as their predominant symptom, was 13·33 against 13·80 in 1937 and 18·27 during the last decennium. The total expenditure of local boards on public health during 1938 amounted to Rs.1,77,479 as compared with Rs.1,61,160 in 1937. Vital Statistics.

SECTION 5.—Vaccination

[*See* the Annual Public Health Report of Assam for 1938.]

178. The total number of vaccination operations performed during 1938-39 by all agencies was 855,034 of which 463,800 were primary and 391,234 re-vaccination as compared with 825,907 of which 438,017 were primary and 387,890 re-vaccination in the preceding year. The death-rate from small-pox per mille was 0·19 against 0·25 in the preceding year. The highest death-rate (0·54) was reported from the district of Nowgong.

SECTION 6.—Bacteriological and Pasteur Vaccine Institute

[*See* the Annual Report on the working of the King Edward VII Memorial Pasteur Institute and Medical Research Institute, Shillong, for 1938.]

179. During the year anti-rabic treatment was carried out at the Pasteur Institute, Shillong, and at 24 public and 42 private out-centres authorised by Government. Out of the 2,233 persons who applied for treatment 1,875 (152 at the Pasteur Institute, Shillong, and 1,723 at out-centres) completed treatment against 1,806 in 1937. The death-rate was 0·79 against 0·89 in the preceding year. Pasteur Institute.

The total number of specimens examined in the Pasteur Institute during 1938 was 3,119 against 2,378 in the previous year.

During the year 9,86,568½ c.c. of cholera vaccine and 4,95,872 doses of bacteriophage were issued against 425,443½ c.c. and 4,01,884 doses respectively in 1937. The issues of cholera vaccine were more than doubled this year owing chiefly to the cholera epidemic which occurred in the Sylhet district and to the re-introduction of vaccination into the bacteriophage experimental area of Habiganj.

180. The Assam Medical Research Society continued its activities and research work relating to Malaria.

Instruction.

CHAPTER VII

INSTRUCTION

SECTION 1.—General System of Public Instruction

[*See* General Administration Report for 1921-22, Part II, pages 128-131.]

SECTION 2.—Education

General statistics.

181. The number of institutions of all kinds rose from 8,886 to 9,608, *i.e.*, by 722 or 8·1 per cent. and their enrolment from 494,205 to 544,620, *i.e.*, by 50,415 or 10·2 per cent. Recognised institutions increased from 7,983 to 8,297, *i.e.*, by 314 or 3 per cent. and their enrolment from 456,306 to 485,992, *i.e.*, by 29,686 or 6·5 per cent. and unrecognised institutions from 903 to 1,311, *i.e.*, by 408 or 45·1 per cent. and their enrolment from 37,899 to 58,628, *i.e.*, by 20,729 or 54·6 per cent.

The total expenditure on public instruction in the Province increased from Rs.58,52,440 to Rs.60,22,085, *i.e.*, by Rs.1,69,645 or 2·8 per cent. The increase in expenditure from the Provincial revenues amounted to Rs.67,986 or 2·1 per cent.

Collegiate education.

182. The enrolment in the two Government Arts Colleges at Gauhati and Sylhet rose from 1,734 to 1,799. The number of passes in the Degree and Intermediate Exminations were 291 and 339 against 247 and 340 respectively in the previous year. The number of Degree and the Intermediate passes from private Colleges were 16 and 216 respectively.

Secondary education.

183. The number of secondary schools for boys increased from 576 to 610 and the enrolment from 88,833 to 95,136, *i.e.*, by 6,303 or 7 per cent. Boys' High Schools for Indians increased from 95 to 105 and their enrolment from 29,964 to 32,583 ; Middle English Schools from 259 to 269 and their enrolment from 23,097 to 24,064 ; Middle Vernacular Schools from 222 to 236 and their enrolment from 35,772 to 38,489.

Primary education.

184. The number of Primary Schools for boys increased from 6,295 to 6,483, their enrolment from 314,567 to 332,653 and their expenditure from Rs.13,33,467 to Rs.13,93,888, *i.e.*, by Rs.60,421.

Training of teachers.

185. There were 13,935 teachers (12,572 men and 1,363 women) against 13,250 teachers (12,003 men and 1,247 women) in the previous year. Of these 3,991 teachers were trained and the rest untrained. The total direct expenditure on provincial training institutions decreased from Rs.72,902 to Rs.68,600.

In the B. T. Classes attached to the St. Edmund's Arts College, Shillong, there were 76 students under training. Examination results were excellent, out of 74 students who appeared 59 passed with 4 first class.

Law College.

186. The enrolment at the Earle Law College at Gauhati increased from 62 to 75. The College still continues its temporary lease of life. Eighteen students passed out of 20 presented for B. L. Examination. The total direct expenditure decreased from Rs.12,802 to Rs.11,994, out of which 56·5 per cent. was met from fee receipts.

Technical and Industrial Schools.

187. There were 17 technical and industrial schools including 4 for females with 831 pupils on the rolls against 18 schools with 727 pupils of the preceding year.

Government Madrasa.

188. The total enrolment of the Government Madrasa at Sylhet increased from 329 to 332. Direct expenditure increased from Rs.31,482 to Rs.33,562.

Sanskrit College.

189. The number of students on the roll of the Government Sanskrit College at Sylhet was 29 against 27 in the previous year. The total direct cost of the institution was Rs.13,225 against Rs.12,688 of the previous year. The examination results were satisfactory.

The Assam Sanskrit Association and its executive—the Assam Sanskrit Board—have completed their fourteenth year of their existence. The numbers of successful candidates were 1, 3 and 6 in the first, second and title examinations respectively.

Tols.

190. There were 179 *Tols* recognised by the Sanskrit Board. Returns were received from 134 *Tols* only with 2,049 pupils against 131 *Tols* with 2,121 pupils in the preceding year.

Female Education.

191. There were two Arts Colleges for Women—the Lady Keane College and the St. Mary's College, both situated in Shillong. Their enrolment was 101 against 72 students in the preceding year. Government contributed Rs.4,850 out of a total expenditure of Rs.21,809.

The number of all classes of institutions for girls increased from 1,036 to 1,129 and the number of girls in all classes of institutions for boys and girls including Colleges increased from 100,154 to 113,656, *i.e.*, by 13,502 or 13·4 per cent.

192. The number of Anglo-Indian and European institutions remained at 4 as in the previous year. Their enrolment rose from 559 to 615 and the total expenditure decreased from Rs.2,83,635 to Rs.2,72,413. About 77·4 per cent. of the total cost was met from fees and private sources. Anglo-Indian and European education.

193. The Muhammadan pupils in all classes of institutions for Indians rose from 138,507 to 151,693 as shown below :— Muhammadan education.

Institutions	Number of Muhammadan pupils in—	
	1938-39	1937-38
Colleges	518	489
High Schools	7,120	6,674
Middle English Schools	8,196	7,808
Middle Vernacular Schools	7,179	6,700
Primary Schools	105,462	97,519
Special Schools	1,590	1,620
Unrecognised Institutions	21,628	17,697
Total ...	151,693	138,507

194. The table below compares the enrolment in the Hill Districts for the last two years :— Hill Tribes.

	Primary		Secondary		Total	
	1938-39	1937-38	1938-39	1937-38	1938-39	1937-38
Khasi and Jaintia Hills ...	15,749	15,542	4,850	4,619	20,599	20,161
Naga Hills	3,912	3,594	997	938	4,909	4,532
Lushai Hills	9,182	8,673	878	832	10,060	9,505
Garo Hills	6,649	6,408	867	690	7,516	7,098

195. The number of tea garden schools rose from 115 to 163 and their enrolment from 3,619 to 6,954. Tea Garden Schools.

Discipline was quite satisfactory. Discipline.

SECTION 3.—Literature and Press

196. The total number of publications received during the year 1938-39 was 19 against 10 in the previous year. They are classified as below :—

Miscellaneous	18
School Books and Keys	1

Of these 18 are first editions and one is fifth edition : Assamese 11, Bengali 1, English 2, Anglo-Assamese-Bengali 2, Sanskrit-Assamese 1, Bodo 1, Mikir 1.

Archeology.

CHAPTER VIII

MISCELLANEOUS

Ecclesiastical jurisdiction

[*See* General Administration Report for 1921-22, Part II, Page 134.]

SECTION 2.—Ecclesiastical

197. The Ecclesiastical Establishment maintained entirely or in part by the Government, consisted of the Chaplaincy of Shillong and the State-aided Chaplaincies of Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and Silchar.

The Right Reverend G. C. Hubback, D. D., the Bishop of Assam was in charge of the Diocese and the Reverend W. Boulton was Chaplain of Shillong thoughout the year.

The total expenditure for the year 1938-39 was Rs.17,593.

SECTION 3.—Stationery

198. The original budget grant for the year under report, was Rs.62,500 which was subsequenty revised to Rs. 60,900. After withdrawals and additional grants sanctioned from time to time, the grant stood at Rs.50,940 against this sum the expenditure for the year amounted to Rs.52,761. The result at the close of the year was a saving of Rs.8,139 including the reserve of Rs. 960 at the disposal of Government.

SECTION 4.—Printing

[*See* Annual Report of the Assam Government Press for the year 1938-39.]

199. During the year under report the receipts of the Press increased from Rs.12,922 to Rs.30,926 and the total expenditure excluding book adjustment from Rs.1,30,926 to Rs.1,32,842. The increase of expenditure is due to the reduction of the working hours of the Press by one hour and the consequent reduction in production.

SECTION 5.—Veterinary Department

[*See* the Report of the Civil Veterinary Department, Assam, for the year 1938-39.]

Staff.

200. MR. P. G. Pande, M.SC., M.R.C.V.S., continued to hold the post of the Veterinary Investigation Officer, Assam, from the 1st April 1938 till 4th January 1939 when he was transferred to the United Provinces and Babu Bhudhar Chandra Chatterjee who was temporarily appointed in place of Mr. Pande held charge till the end of the year.

The total strength of the subordinate veterinary staff consisted of 1 Johne's Disease Officer (temporary), four Veterinary Inspectors, and sixty-one Veterinary Assistant Surgeons including two temporay Veterinary Assistant Surgeons.

Cattle disease.

201. The total mortality during the year was 59,241 of which Rinderpest alone was responsible for the death of 34,120 animals. The total number of animals inoculated against Rinderpest by different methods was 278,812 of which 1,724 animals died after inoculations.

Only 1,998 animals were inoculated by the "Serum alone" method and the rest by the Goat Tissue Vaccine method. The number of in and out-patients treated at the three Government Veterinary Hospitals was 7,844 against 6,552 in the previous year. The total number of cases treated by officers on tour, including castrations, rose from 168,335 to 175,190.

Archeo-logy.

General.

202. It was another unhealthy year for livestock. As in the last year Rinderpest was responsible for more than half of the total mortality. This disease was prevalent in all the districts except the Naga Hills and the Lushai Hills. Epidemics were severe and widespread in the districts of Sylhet, Kamrup, Nowgong, Goalpara and Darrang which suffered the heaviest loss. The Department had to encounter one of the worst types of epidemic of Surra amongst horses in South Sylhet subdivision of the Sylhet district but the situation was successfully handled and not a single animal had to be destroyed. It was found that one of the causes to which these epidemics have been attributed is unrestricted movement of cattle. The question of legislation was carefully considered by Government and they have been advised that in extreme cases executive action only can be taken to prevent such movements. Instructions have accordingly been issued to the Director, Veterinary Department, to move the Magistrates concerned when occasion arises. As usual there was always a demand for veterinary aid from all parts of the province, during the year but it was difficult for the existing staff to cope with the demand. A proposal for the re-organisation of the Veterinary Department is now under the contemplation of Government. Goat Tissue Vaccine method of inoculation against Rinderpest is now solely used for the plains cattte of the province. It has been recognised that the faulty system of dual control of the Veterinary Assistant Surgeons by the Department and the Local Boards is not working satisfactorily and the Government have decided to put the matter before the poposed Local Bodies' Conference for expression of their views. The total expenditure of the Department during the year was Rs.2,07,411 against Rs.1,91,677 in the preceding year.

SECTION 6.—Electricity

[*See* Report on the Working of the Indian Electricity Act in Assam for the year ending the 31st December, 1938.]

203. Eight licenses were in operation during the year under review. One new license was granted for Nowgong and another for Tinsukia was sanctioned but not notified before the end of the year; neither of these operated during the year.

There were no prosecutions under the Indian Electricity Act or Rules.

A. G.P. (G.J.) No.12 —175—18-7-1940.